

## Anti-Aircraft Artillery 1914 -1947

Anti - Aircraft as the name symbolises is the anti thesis of aircraft and it evolved with the military use of aircraft in First World War. Wright Brothers historic twelve seconds flight on 3 December 1903 ushered the mankind into a new dominion of air; the third dimension. Within few years of its first flight, aircraft were put into military use by the Italians, when they dropped few bombs from the aircraft during campaign in Libya. It was the Great War (1914-1918) which saw the strategic and tactical employment of the aircraft. Initially aircraft were used for artillery gun corrections and message dropping; both type of missions had direct impact on the overall outcome of the war and the campaigns.

Since Montgolfier brother's hot air balloon ascent in 1783, the speculation of aerial war started brewing. The German domination in airship Zeppelin from 1900 had aroused the public interest in the air defence of London fermented by the popular literature.<sup>1</sup> In 1911, a demonstration was held at London in which a mock ship was destroyed by dropping aerial bombs. First an air battalion was formed on 1 April 1911 at Farnborough and finally on 13 April 1912, The Royal Flying Corps (RFC) was raised.<sup>2</sup> They were under command Royal Engineers.

In 1670, the very first artillery company was raised in England however it was in France that Artillery reached its zenith in the time of Charles XIV(1643-1715) who separated artillery from the rest of army to give them their unique importance. Adolphus Gustavo's

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1 Herbert George Wells *War in the Air*; series of articles published in early part and full book in 1907. <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/780>

2 ,1[https://web.archive.org/web/20061218200955/http://www.remuseum.org.uk/rem\\_his\\_special.htm#aero](https://web.archive.org/web/20061218200955/http://www.remuseum.org.uk/rem_his_special.htm#aero) . Lee Kennett, *The First Air War 1914-1918* (Free Press,NY,1991),pp-1-10. *Papers by Command.Great Britain.Parliament.House of Commons* 1916,pp,749-779.

(1594-1632) in Thirty Years wars did bring a military revolution in terms of organisation and tactics including employing artillery and infantry together apart from standardizing the shell weight and artillery into various branches. Royal Regiment of Artillery after its raising with two permanent companies in 1716 virtually set the pace, trends and standards for British Army, they were the first one to have their own academy in 1746. They overcame their limitation of speed by raising Royal Horse Artillery (RHA). In 1889, RHA were lettered and field battery was numbered, Royal Artillery would term its two battery composition as a ‘artillery brigade’.<sup>3</sup>

### **First Great War (1914-1918)**

The war had started due to an individual act of Gavrilo Princip an ordinary man at Sarajevo on 28 June 1914 and lasted for four long years taking in its toll over a million men. The perceived threat from air became a reality as the very first aerial bombing of the war took place at Paris on 30 August 1914. Among all the belligerents only France had an anti-aircraft artillery and a school as well. However it was the bombing of London which brought a paradigm shift in the overall complexion of the war; cities and civilians were no more safe from the havoc of war itself. Immediately the only plausible defence against the aerial attack on London was the aircraft itself and RFC was employed. Soon it became apparent that aircrew cannot remain in air for long, above all the inability to fly at night to intercept the German aircraft was the cardinal factor which prompted employment of one and two pounder artillery pieces to hit the intruding aircraft. Technical alterations were carried out on the barrels to improve velocity. Pom-Pom was a Vickers 1 Pound Quick Firing Gun (QF-1 pounder 37 mm) first developed in Boer War alongwith QF-2 Pounder 40mm which was developed in 1915,

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3 C.A.L.Grahaam, Brigadier General. *Story of Royal Regiment of Artillery* (Royal Artillery Institution, Woolwich, 1962), pp, 1-70

were the two primary anti-aircraft guns available. Both versions had limited range 2000-4000 meters; they were called as Pom-Pom mainly due to their firing sound and this name became synonym with anti-aircraft gunners.

The major issue was the early warning about the airships and aircraft. First an Observation Corps was established comprising of old infantarians to warn about the incoming hostile aircraft, they would report on the civil telephone lines which were few and became clogged with frantic calls about the sound of hostile aircraft around the clock. Thus separate lines were laid and a central headquarter was established to receive and verify the early warning and pass it on to the guns and the aircraft. To facilitate own aircraft in the air, search lights were made and deployed, manned by a separate corps under Home Guard. These search lights could lit an area of 350 square yards in the sky. They did not had much success but remained as a concept and organisation well into 1940s. These search lights were also a guidance for the retreating and lost own aircraft. As the mobility of gun was slow thus chassis of London Lorries were utilised to make them mobile. Anti-Aircraft defence became a priority for the British Government and many a cabinet meetings were devoted on the subject; the end conclusion was to give it a top priority as morale of population was the key factor in winning the war itself.

Anti-Aircraft Artillery took birth in this background. It must be highlighted that apart from the aircraft, airships were also employed in the initial days of this war. As a matter of fact, it were the airships which posed greater threat to the belligerents than the aircraft. Germany had a much superior airpower in the form of airships and it was Germany which carried out bombing over London employing Zeppelin. Thus the very first use of anti-aircraft took place in overcoming this menace of airships. By mid-1916, there were no

less than 278 AA Guns and 260 searchlights placed around London alone. <sup>4</sup>

Anti-aircraft artillery guns were no different from the ordinary artillery guns, they differed chiefly, in the method of firing and the ammunition being used. A field artillery gun is meant to fire a shell at an enemy position which is a distance away from the own troops. An artillery observer through observation calculates the range and passes the data to the guns and then corrects the round. Seldom, an artillery shells falls at the same location even if the data remains the same. The reason being that a shell is affected by the weather, wind and the wear and tear of the gun itself. In terms of hitting an aircraft, it becomes even more difficult, first is to spot the aircraft, calculates its height, azimuth, speed, direction of flight and correspondingly fire the artillery shell; aiming at the forward spot where the aircraft will be. These calculations were the major task which consumed much of the scientists and tacticians time.

On Western Front, the aerial threat was more in terms of photographic and artillery reconnaissance missions.<sup>5</sup> The air war itself was chivalrous in nature with more focus on dog fights, yet the threat of aerial attacks on population was there. Initially only eighteen guns were deployed for anti-aircraft purpose, pattern was to have them in front of the front in pair and in the rear at headquarters mostly isolated in nature. German anti-aircraft defences had balloons deployed at 3000-4000 feet as a means of early warning of hostile aircraft, 'as after crossing them anti-aircraft fire started...anti aircraft defence around Mannheim were considerable in number and the shooting was accurate'.<sup>6</sup>

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4 CAB /24/20 *Committee on Air Organisation and Home Defence against air raids*. Dated 11 July 1917. <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/results/r?q=anti+aircraft+artillery> <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/first-world-war/home-front-stories/defending-the-skies/>

5 London Gazette dated 9<sup>th</sup> July 1915.

6 CAB/24/37 . *Bombing Report from Lieutenant Colonel C.L.Newall commanding 41<sup>st</sup> Wing RFC*.

British parliament gradually accepted that air power can undertake the land forces task at a much more economical cost. 'As far as can at present be foreseen there is absolutely no limit to independent use of air and the day may not be far off when aerial operations with their devastation of enemy land and destruction of industrial and populous centres on a vast scale may become the principal operations of war to which all other forms of military and naval operations may become secondary and sub-ordinate'.<sup>7</sup> It was in April 1918 that the first independent air force Royal Air Force (RAF) was established with Air Marshal Hugh Trenchard as its chief. Trenchard had served at Sialkot in 1890s and played Polo with future prime minister of UK; Lieutenant Winston Churchill.

Americans entered into the war in 1917, at that time they did not had any dedicated anti -aircraft artillery. initially 25 American officers attended a course at French anti-aircraft school at Arnouville-les-Gonesse. Later over twelve thousand American troops served as part of anti-aircraft defence; yet the very first full-fledged American anti-aircraft artillery unit was raised in 1922.<sup>8</sup>

Italians used the 75mm (3 Inch) Deport gun for anti-aircraft, it had a maximum elevation of 85 degrees and fired 21 shots per minute. Italians preferred high explosive shell over shrapnel. 'The incendiary shell use with a time fuze throws out, upon exploding, a number of small balls containing a very efficient burning liquid'.<sup>9</sup> French had their main reliance upon their 75mm gun, an upgraded version of 1897 model. It fired 25 shots per minute. French were relying upon shrapnel, each weighing 7.4 kilograms, the high explosive shell weight 5.3 kilograms. 75 mm gun; 'it has a recoil mechanism, so perfect that it can be fired continuously without

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7 Robertson Scot, *Development of RAF Strategic Bombing Doctrine*, (London, Praeger Studies). P-17

8 *Army Ground Forces Study No.26*. Historical Section. The Anti-Aircraft Command and Centre (USA) No.15419 dated 1946.p-2

9 *Notes on Anti Aircraft Guns*, compiled at The Army War College, April 1917. US Government Printing Office.

relaying'.<sup>10</sup> French also employed 37 mm rapid fire Naval Guns and 105mm gun for high altitude targets as well.

In the post First World War, varying studies were carried and many funded out by the War Office mainly on, how to detect the incoming aircraft. In 1928, Cabinet Imperial Defence (CID) committee authorised experiments in this regard. Air threat was perceived to be flying at a speed of 150 miles per hour at an altitude of 20,000 feet. Resultantly, the technical idea of building a 150 feet diameter of mirror to detect the incoming aircraft by utilising the sound waves was approved.<sup>11</sup> RAF had firm faith in the doctrine that Bomber can get through and war can be won by the sheer employment of aircraft alone. Germany alone was the most advanced country in conceptual field as far as anti-aircraft defence is concerned. They had created the anti-aircraft regiments and placed them under command Luftwaffe, they adopted anti-aircraft as a doctrine. Buildings were required to have certain specifications in constructions, refugee halls were constructed, air raid shelters were designated in each city, a civil organisation for anti-aircraft defence was raised with over twelve million members. Tactically the anti-aircraft was made integral to Luftwaffe rather than the field army. There were corps, divisions and regiments of anti-aircraft artillery or Flak (Flugabwehrkanone).<sup>12</sup>

In Germany under Adolf Hitler, 'the first line consisted of fighter aircraft, whose functions and possibilities are already well known in Great Britain. The second line is the anti-aircraft artillery. The duty of this arm is to destroy the invader if the fighters fail... There are over thirty regiments of regular anti-aircraft troops who do a minimum of two years continuous service, while the local defence of factories and other vital areas by reservist territorial formations

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10 *Notes on Anti Aircraft Guns 1917.*

11 CAB/24/194 *Anti Aircraft Research report dated 20<sup>th</sup> April 1928.*

12 Flak stands for Fliegerabwehrkanone (anti airplane cannon).

is rapidly being organised. German officers claim that under ideal conditions 18 per cent, of hits can be achieved upon targets at a high altitude of the average battery.<sup>13</sup>

On the eve of the Second World War, America had only seven Anti-Aircraft artillery regiments; they were known as Coastal Artillery. By mid-1941, America had 43 Mobile Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiments, along with six semi-mobile and one barrage balloon regiment. In March 1942, Americans raised Anti-Aircraft Command (AAC).<sup>14</sup>

## Balloons

Balloons were used by the British quite extensively in the WW1 for aerial reconnaissance in the field and later as anti-aircraft defence measure. Germans and French had employed them before the British. However British reliance upon balloons were more compelling than others; London being under attack from Zeppelin. Air raids started in January 1915 and lasted till September 1917, when Gotha Bombers replaced the airships. Over fifty such raids were carried out by eighty-one airships in these two years, causing 557 civilian casualties, in the process thirty airships were lost by Germans. First Gotha air attack on England took place on 25 May 1917 and within weeks no less than seventeen Gothas attacked London.<sup>15</sup>

British introduced balloons in October 1917, their main purpose was to compel the Gotha to fly at higher altitude. Gotha had an effective ceiling of 14000 feet, whereas these balloons had an

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13 CAB/24/271. *German Anti Aircraft Defences, dated 5<sup>th</sup> October 1937*. Report by Sir Ogilvie-Forbes to Viscount Halifax.

14 No 15419. The Anti aircraft Command and Centre, Army Study No.26 , 1946.

15 Major Franklin Hellison *When the Balloons goes up, barrage Balloons for low level Air Defence*. U.S. Air Command and Staff College, Air University Report No.88-1225 June 1986. Pp,1-7.

elevation of 10,000 feet. Initially three balloons 500 yards apart joined by a heavy cable; affixed to this cable were 1000 feet long vertical hanging cables having an interval of 75 feet. The balloons tactical deployment was commonly termed as Apron, there were thus ten such Aprons around London.

In 1936, as part of Anti-Aircraft defence measures CID (Committee for Imperial Defence), authorised 450 balloons, tactically, British opted to have balloons being airborne singular rather than in pairs as in Aprons. By end August, a Balloon Command was raised with an air marshal in command, no less than 2300 balloons were deployed around England. Americans had also seriously evaluated balloons for air defence mainly in Panama Canal area. They had balloons for low altitude filled with 20,000 cubic feet of gas on ground, thus balloons had an elevation of 5000 feet.

## **Second Great War (1939-1945)**

The war came as no surprise, air power had matured to an extent where it became decisive or at least this is how it was perceived. Cities, towns, industrial centres, logistics, sea ports, air fields and above all destruction of morale were the initial and main targets for air force. Subsequently defence against such attacks and threats were also placed on the aircraft itself. Destruction of enemy airforce at ground or in air was the best viable anti-aircraft defence itself. France was doomed within days of the campaign, her airforce was destroyed on ground, British Expeditionary Force (BEF) met the same fate, RAF realised that earlier strategy of her bombers flying through has been blunted by the superior German fighters and her support to field formations been neutralised by better tactical display of Flak.

London once again came under attack from June 1940 and attacks on the capital increased day by day. British anti-aircraft



defences relied upon the anti-aircraft artillery, mainly on heavy 3 inch gun supported by 40 millimetres Bofors light anti-aircraft guns. United Kingdom was initially organised into corps and divisions of anti-aircraft artillery but later they were disbanded and reorganised into Anti-Aircraft Groups, there were nine such groups. Tactically they were under command RAF, as the overall responsibility of air defence of Great Britain was entrusted to RAF. There were RAF's commands and sectors and within these the anti aircraft weapons operated.

In the Battle of Britain, balloon had the same aim as in WW1 to compel the aircraft to fly at high altitude thus denying observation to pilot and it also provide a good height for Anti-Aircraft guns to be more effective. Luftwaffe attacked balloon sites at Dover on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1940, they were able to destroy 23 balloons but in the process lost three aircraft to AA fire. British also took an innovative step and raised mobile balloon squadrons. Allies had full faith in the balloons and as such no less than 4000 personnels part of balloon squadrons were integral segment that landed on D-Day.

The anti-aircraft artillery defences of London were being more than doubled. 'On the previous night it had been decided to put up a pretty heavy barrage, and about 100 rounds per gun had been fired. As a result of the barrage one-third of the raiders had turned back. It was also noticeable that while enemy aircraft which had penetrated the defences earlier in the night had flown at about 180 miles an hour at a height of 12,000 to 16,000 feet, later in the night they had flown at about 240 miles an hour at about 27,000 feet.'<sup>16</sup>

At the heart of effective anti-aircraft defence was the early warning of intruder, observers were deployed at the outer most edge, they were one of the main means of obtaining warning alongwith

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16 CAB 65/9/10 . Meeting of British War Cabinet held on 12 September 1940 at 1230 P.M. with Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in chair.

technical equipment like sound ranging. Radio Detection and Ranging(Radar) made their impact on the eve of Battle of Britain after decade of experimentation in UK. Anti-Aircraft compelled Luftwaffe to adopt a high altitude pattern of attack over London (altitude above 20,000 feet), aerial navigation was still primitive and night bombing was more based upon mathematical calculations to reach over the target. AA guns required computation for the aircraft speed and direction; one of the key limitations of radars was that they assumed the aircraft to maintain constant heading and speed for computation. This data was passed over to either a control sector or to the guns directly. Another bone of contention was the fire control, it passed between the gun officers and control room and finally settling down with the gun officers.

Two distinct type of anti-aircraft guns became prominent, heavy anti-aircraft of 3 and 3.7 inch and light calibre 20 and 40 mm guns. Both have certain advantages, meant for high altitude intruders above 15000 -23000 feet. Heavy anti-aircraft was heavy in calibre and weight (15-20 CWT), ammunition alone for heavy AA guns around London in 1943 was over 20,000 tons. HAA guns were off two main categories 'static' and 'mobile'; static required more time and efforts to shift from one point to the other whereas 'mobile' still of the same design had wheels. Light Anti-Aircraft (LAA) guns were light weight, more manoeuvrable, mobile and quick to lay and required less manpower and calculation for firing. They became more famous as they were mostly deployed at the airfields. Machine guns of 20mm calibre were more effective at the airstrips countering the low level attackers. This was a new phase in the warfare where the duel was the between the pilot and the gunner on the ground, in an head-on attack approach aligned with the runway which was the most logical direction, this duel would last for few minutes.

An aircraft can be brought down with a single bullet; theoretically. Aircraft fly on laws of physics; to every action there is an equal

reaction, thus it does not matter whether it has been hit with a heavy shell or a light bullet, it is the momentum and weight of the aircraft itself which is the deciding factor. Bird hits in our own time to commercial and military aircraft have taken it toll. During Battle of Britain, Luftwaffe had to attack the RAF airfields at low level to hit a precise target like an aircraft parked on tarmac. LAA and machine guns were most effective in such situation. Another consideration in the employment of the AA guns was the fall of the shot itself, unlike in the field where the fall of round is invariably over hostile terrain, in AA it is over own population and own airfields; both detrimental to morale. Induction of women in military in both USA and UK was primarily in anti-aircraft role. In UK no less than 1,80,000<sup>17</sup> women were active part of AA throughout the war. In USA, women were inducted in the coastal anti-aircraft artillery. Women also manned search lights, they were part of the crew however they were not assigned on the LAA guns and neither actually fired the HAA guns as well.

### **American Anti-Aircraft Artillery**

American Army and general public paid little attention to the anti-aircraft defences; Americans considered themselves geographically impregnable. Coastal Artillery was made responsible for the AA, Coastal Artillery(CA) thus established the nucleus, they conducted training courses, debated and improvised the existing techniques. To CA, hitting a target in air was similar to hitting a ship, both are moving forward. The anti-aircraft training in the American Army's infantry regiments revolved around the principle that every soldier should point his rifle upward and open fire at long range. The speed of the targets is regulated to correspond to the apparent speed of an airplane traveling 100 miles per hour at a range of 1,000 feet; thus, a shot fired from the .22-caliber rifle with a lead of one silhouette length will strike in the silhouette. As the velocity of the .30-caliber

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17 [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)

bullet is much greater than the .22-caliber bullet, a shot, fired with the .30-caliber rifle aimed at the leading edge of the silhouette will strike in the forward half of that target.<sup>18</sup> Americans were convinced that an air attack will be of short duration in the field, thus their training directive highlight. A hostile air attack is of such short duration, from 10 to 20 seconds, that adjustment of fire must be made by individual riflemen. The leader must note the fire effect of his unit from observation of the tracer ammunition and in his fire order for subsequent attacks allow for errors noted in the previous attack.<sup>19</sup>

By 1940-41, American ground forces had adopted 40 mm Bofors anti-aircraft gun as their standard AA weapon. They were also using the 37mm gun as well. A high emphasis was laid on the importance of .50 Calibre Browning MG (machine gun). The .50 caliber MG was used with both single and multiple mounts that permit firing at 90 degree elevations. In spite of the fact that many considered the .50 MG too light a weapon against aircraft, it proved its worth on every battlefield since the entry of the United States into World War II, and exacted a heavy quota of aerial targets engaged.

Soon after entering into war, American Army raised an Anti-Aircraft Command (AAC) on 9 March 1942 commanded by a major general, this AAC was an upgradation of coastal artillery as CA was soon disbanded. American Army acknowledges that, they were inexperience in this field and as such adopted and followed British AA Regime. On raising AAC had an estimated manpower of over half a million enlisted men and 20,000 officers. With the passing of days, this requirement was never wholly fulfilled and shortage of manpower remained a sore point. Negro men were enlisted but were

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18 *Army Ground Forces Study No.26*. Historical section. The anti-aircraft Command and Centre (USA) No.15419 dated 1946.

19 U.S. Army Institute of Military History. *Basic Field Manual Volume III, Basic weapons, Part VI, chapter II Infantry Weapons*. Washington.1933.

termed as low mentality and troublesome by the authorities. The tendency of the Negro to react to mob psychology and unfounded rumour was a direct cause for serious trouble in more than one case within the AAC. In general, in training colored AA artillerymen, it was found that most Negroes lacked the ability to become thoroughly proficient with AAA weapons and fire control instruments.<sup>20</sup>

Americans by the end of 1943 had organised their anti-aircraft artillery into various battalions, they had an air borne AA Battery having 85 enlisted men commanded by five officers with twelve .50 Caliber AA Machine Guns as main weapon. They also had Air Transportable Automatic Weapons Battalions equipped with 40 mm gun, each battalion had four batteries and each battery equipped with eight 40 mm guns mounted on two wheel M5 mount; apart from 40 mm guns each battery also had eight .50 caliber Maxson mounted guns.

AAC had two main types of AA Battalions, mobile and semi mobile heavy anti-aircraft guns. Such HAA battalions had three batteries; each battery having four 3 inch guns, within a battalion there was one battery exclusive for search lights having fifteen search-lights. The mobile or LAA Battalions had similar organisation, they had either eight 37mm or 40mm guns in each battery, instead of having a separate searchlight battery, LAA had one battery comprising of .50 machine guns.<sup>21</sup> All in all, 451 AA Battalions were trained and shipped abroad from USA and another over 570 AA units were trained and served on the continent USA.

### **Anti Aircraft Artillery in Sub-Continent 1940-1947**

Karachi was always important for the British Empire as a hub of maritime and later aviation; both military and civil. Very first air

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<sup>20</sup> *Army Ground Forces Study No.26*, p,137.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*,p-77.

base in sub-continent India was commissioned at Drigh Cantonment and later Mauripur emerged as the leading military aerodrome. Campaigns in North Western Frontier Province (NWFP) were the raison attire. In 1880s a naval coastal battery under Royal Artillery was stationed at Manora known as Karachi Volunteer Artillery. On the eve of WWII, defence of South East Asia was debated and discussed in CID and especially the AA defence of ports at Singapore, Hong Kong, Aden and Karachi was considered.

British in early 1939<sup>22</sup> had carried out a detailed study on the modernisation of the Indian Army and the defence requirement of India. London reached a hypothesis that ‘there is no threat of any major power attacking India...main threat remains Kabul...there is a threat to the ports of India and as such coastal defence be raised’. This coastal defence includes ports of Karachi, Bombay, Madras , Calcutta and two minor ports. It was proposed and agreed that anti aircraft artillery should be raised and be part of the coastal defence. For Karachi, one British infantry battalion, one Indian infantry battalion and a battery of heavy anti-aircraft guns were agreed along with two 6 inches guns in naval role. The battery organisation which was to be uniformed for all coastal defence anti aircraft batteries , comprised of 224 all ranks and eight 3.7 inch anti-aircraft guns. Organisationally a battery had a headquarters and four sections and each to have two guns. There were 17 wheeled tractors also authorised to the battery. The guns were categorised as D, highlighting that for initial and all other maintenance, UK has to be relied and only gun liners were to be manufactured locally. However the ammunition of the gun was categorised as B; initial purchase from UK and later to be manufactured in India. A total of 32 heavy anti-aircraft guns were earmarked for India’s coastal defence.

Soon, the war broke out in Europe and induction of planned 3.7 inches HAA guns was delayed yet the 3 inches gun already enroute

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22 CAB 24-287-16 *Defence of India 1939, dated 16<sup>th</sup> June*. National Archives

were inducted at Karachi. The very first anti aircraft section in India was thus raised at Karachi on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1939. As per the customs of the service, the pioneers AA sections were termed as S and U. Later these sections with the induction of more guns were organised into a battery and then to No.1 Royal Heavy Anti Aircraft (Indian Artillery) Regiment. Initially Drigh and later Malir became the home base of AA. Coastal Artillery and Anti Aircraft (CAAA) training establishment was also established at Clifton where live firing practice was given to the recruits. Battery thus became the basic brick of anti-aircraft, they were numbered whereas the sections were alphabetically organised.

Manpower came from mountain, anti tank and field artillery batteries and regiments. A recruit after undergoing basic military training at Ambala (artillery centre) was posted to the Ack Ack and had to undergo another ten weeks of training on the type at Karachi. Soldiers were given numbers and to distinguish anti aircraft gunners from other gunners the prefix of AAA was used. A heavy reliance was placed upon the British non commissioned officers which numbered 24 in the regiment. In India at that time, British had the policy of having mixed troops in the army, thus within anti-aircraft regiments Muslims, Brahmin, Sikhs, Ahir, Ranghar, Madrasi to name some were organised into separate batteries. Thus No.3 Battery was a Punjabi Muslim battery where as a later raised 14 Battery was all Madrasi. These diversified religiously organised troops and batteries had different eating taboos. In one instance a Brahmin troops had to cook their food again because the shadow of a non Brahmin (A British subaltern) had fallen over the food being prepared.<sup>23</sup>

Officers were also posted from Royal Artillery they were all British. Indian soldiers were posted from Field and Mountain Artillery into newly raised AA Regiments. Throughout the Burma

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23 *Major Lancelot Lester Nash Military Cross.*, narration Imperial War Museum <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80020144>

campaign new AA regiments were raised and grouped under AA Brigades and also form part of infantry formations.

### **Burma Campaign and Anti Aircraft Artillery**

Burma was part of Indian Empire and separated in 1935, a thickly jungle vegetated, crisscrossed by wide rivers including Irrawaddy. Communication infrastructure was in poor state with few bridges allowing road and rail movement across the water channels. Public by and large adhered to Buddhism and nonviolent by nature. Very first AA deployment took place in summer of 1941 when No.2 Battery of No.1 Heavy AA Regiment was move from Karachi to Digboi in Assam. Digboi was the main oil fields of India and as such the AA guns were deployed. ‘ It was all done under great secrecy, guns transported by train from Karachi, however all secrecy was blown out when in a dinner, the host lady remarked, these guns were commanded by my father back in 1922’.<sup>24</sup> The battery remained deployed well into the autumn of 1941 at Digboi, manpower was all naive in the use of these guns. There were trained British non commissioned officers in AA gunnery and remaining manpower was either newly trained recruits or men transferred from field and mountain artillery. This deployment gave them immense confidence and experience. This heavy battery remained deployed at Digboi almost till the termination of the war.

In October 1941, the very first heavy Ack Ack guns were shipped to Manama (Bahrein) from Drigh Road Karachi, under command Captain Goddard departed without any guns or transport. The Battery remained idle for sometime and returned back to motherboard after few months without firing any shot. They were required as a precaution for the defence of seaport against likely

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<sup>24</sup> Imperial War Museum, *audio recording of Lieutenant Colonel Charles Hemphill Townsend, the battery commander.*



advance and landing of Germans.<sup>25</sup> Singapore and Hong Kong were strategic seaports, a separate artillery regiment was raised for their defence, manpower was trained at Karachi and later No.1 Light Anti Aircraft Regiment (LAA) was raised and dispatched to Singapore, it had two batteries. No.1 HAA Regiment's one battery was also part of this defensive plan. Meanwhile at Malir, in September 1941, orders were received to raise one more battery No.3 Battery, it was to be equipped with Bofors 40mm guns, also one heavy AA Battery was shipped to the Singapore for defence of the port.

### **Calcutta-1941**

In September 1941, the situation on Eastern Front, compelled the employment of both light and heavy anti aircraft regiments. The No. 2 Regiment under command Lieutenant Colonel Barlow (7 and 8 Heavy Ack Ack Batteries) arrived at Calcutta from Karachi by train. The very first induction of 3.7 inch gun also took place at Calcutta; six in number. It is worth highlighting that Sir Archibald Wavell the commander in chief visited the regiment and had good words for their morale.<sup>26</sup> The strength of the regiment was over three hundred with eleven officers, six VCOs, 89 non-commissioned officers. There were ten 3.7 inch guns and six 3 inch guns.

In December 1941, the No.3 AA Battery received orders to move to Calcutta from Malir. My battery was ill trained as compared to other two batteries but being LAA, it was selected. On arrival at Calcutta, we were camped in the outskirts of the city and within a week received orders to move to Rangoon. The environment was such that Indian troops needed to be handled very carefully, as many had refused to serve overseas. I, in consultation with my Viceroy's officer(VCO) had an attestation parade on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1941. All the men were attested, they placed their left hand on the barrel

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25 Digest of Service No.2 Heavy Anti Aircraft Regiment, presently 5 Light Air Defence. This is the oldest pre independence regimental primary source, that has survived in present day Pakistan Army Air Defence

26 C-in-C Sir Wavell visited regiment on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1941, Digest of Service, 5 Heavy Ack Ack Regiment.

of gun and repeated after the Moulvi sahib, taking oath to serve everywhere.<sup>27</sup> The battery was not placed under command of any formation rather kept under army headquarters.

In December 1941, Japan attacked Singapore and within weeks Rangoon the capital had fallen and by May 1941, British retreated to India. The Ack Ack batteries at Singapore perished with the fall of Singapore in January 1942 and men became prisoners of war.

### **Rangoon- Chindwin; Anti-Aircraft**

One heavy anti-aircraft regiment (No. 2 HAA (IA) and one light anti aircraft battery (No. 3) sailed from Calcutta and arrived at Rangoon after five days, it was the only dedicated AA Defence available for the infantry division holding the line. The No. 3 Battery was deployed at the Sittang Bridge whereas the heavy ack ack guns were at Rangoon . The events of coming days were so unexpected and fast that all plans of having any solid defence were soon reduced to trash. Japanese soon over ran the defences and with lightning speed mainly due to their light organisation and equipment. Major Fetzpatrick narrates ‘within a day, I reached the conclusion that more than anything else I need ammunition and mobility, thus instead of keeping the accessories of the 40mm Bofors, which takes one truck per gun. Battery thus reshipped the accessories and this spared twelve trucks for ammunition.’

No.3 LAA Battery took part in Sittang Bridge defence, it withdrew to Pegu and then to Prome. It provided ack ack cover Taungdwingyl and retreated to Monywa and took part in Shwegyin Battle before crossing over River Chindwin.

Japanese compelled British to retreat and once set in motion this became the longest retreat in British military history’ over a thousand

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<sup>27</sup> Imperial War Museum, audio recording of Lieutenant Colonel Charles Hemphill Townsend, the battery commander. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80020185>

miles across many river and through jungles and low mountains. With very few tracks and that too narrow, the long convoys of military vehicles, artillery guns, and tired, low morale soldiers were a tempting target for Japanese airforce. 3 Light Antiaircraft Battery more than any other unit of the retreating formation stands out for keeping the Japanese aircraft at bay and allowing the troops to cross over the river. Their finest hour was at Shwegyin, which many terms as Dunkirk of Asia; the entire formation on the far bank of River Chindwin and crossing is perilous. Bridge head was protected by the Bofors and it was at this moment that the wisdom of having extra ammunition is validated. Japanese in a sheer brilliance brought up a mountain gun in pieces on a top to knock out the ferry; this gun was utterly destroyed by the three Bofors.

Second Lieutenant Ram Dass had joined the regiment at Calcutta, during the critical phase of the retreat crossing, the troops had got into the boat and about to waft away. Major Mecfetridge narrates almost sixty years later ‘ I saw Subaltern Dass realising that guns had been left on the other bank, jumping out and swimming back...I saw him putting the Bofors out of action so make them unserviceable and then lost sight of him’.

Second Lieutenant Nash was commissioned in No.1 Light Anti Aircraft in December 1940. ‘ We were 1200 cadets which were sent from England to India, after training at Deolai (Artillery school), I was posted to anti aircraft, reason being that I had some knowledge of aircraft’.<sup>28</sup> Nash was later posted to the 3 Light Anti Aircraft Battery and sailed with the contingent from Calcutta. During retreat, Nash saw the war as a subaltern, he recalls. ‘During retreat, which was fast as Japanese were quick in advance. We the AA gunners were at the end of the retreat providing cover alongwith infantry. One night, after day of march, I slept with instructions to my VCO(viceroy

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28 Major Lancelot Lester Nash Military Cross., narration Imperial War Museum <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80020144>

commissioned officer) to wake me up when the last infantry moves. I woke up in morning to find the Japanese three hundred yards away. Hurriedly I grab my personal weapon and join the VCO and later managed to join our forces. Later I asked VCO as what time the own infantry marched by, and he replied that it was half past three in the morning. I exclaimed, why did not you wake me up subedar sahib; he replied, how come I knew that this is the last of our infantry’.

## **Back to Malir**

In the aftereffects of the retreat, new anti aircraft regiments and batteries were raised, troops were allowed to recuperate in the Assam area however Major Charles commanding the No. 3 Battery decided to move to Malir. *‘I wanted to train the battery and above all to write the citation for the good work done by the individuals. I discussed it with my commanding officer and he gave important guidelines’*. A year later while Major Charles was undergoing training at Command and Staff College Quetta, the very battery he commanded was decorated with one Military Cross and four Indian Order of Merit.<sup>29</sup> In total the 3 LAA Battery was decorated with 12 awards.

No. 2 HAA was deployed at Assam. The Americans had established airfields to support the Chinese known as ‘Hump’. In 1942-43, small offensives were conducted by British to maintain morale, Chindit was among them. Brigadier Wingate had planned to drop the limited light but highly trained troops behind the Japanese in the jungle with an aim to disrupt their line of communication; they were partial success. By February 1943, three Indian anti-aircraft brigades were raised,( 9<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> ) and so were the light and heavy anti-aircraft regiments. In 1944, during the Burma offensive, LAA regiments were made integral to the infantry division and HAA were kept under-command to the army headquarters.

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<sup>29</sup> London Gazette. Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March 1943, page 1118.

In 1944, British Army initiated its advance into Burma, No. 3 Battery supported an East African infantry brigade, it took part in Battle of Meiktila and reached Rangoon. Lieutenant Nash now a Military Cross was again with the No. 3 AA Battery and they supported 17 Division in advance. Bridgeheads were protected against Japanese air attacks, soft targets and Japanese bunkers were hit directly with 40mm Bofors.

Ack Ack emerged as a paradigm during the Burma Campaign, by virtue of its ability and capability to hit targets both in air and on ground; it acted as anti tank guns as well. Within the army a resistance came against this dual role and thus guns were designed for exclusive use in anti aircraft role. Air raids and attacks are sudden, quick and all around therefore anti aircraft defence has to be ready and prepared at all time. In the dual role, time was consumed in changing the shell and barrel configuration for attaining more velocity. Machine guns and specifically 20mm were very deadly in ground role against any advancing infantry and low flying aircraft. From the pilot perspective, they had to fly in a formation to be effective in destroying or scorching the earth through concentration of bombs. This tactics of aircraft presented good targets for machine gun concentrated fire. At medium altitude , air attacks in Burma on moving formation had little impact. Indian Army during the advance phase in Burma had over twenty LAA regiments and no less than six heavy anti aircraft regiments.

There are many fascinating tales about Burma and the No.3 Battery. During retreat , an old veteran of 1857 Mutiny War who was still alive and met the battery commander, who after a long conversation verified that man has taken part in the 1857 campaign. In another fascinating episode, one AA gunner (Lal Din) of the battery became a pow during retreat, miracously he escaped from Japanese during one of the ‘working party’ and walked a thousand miles all

alone to reach China then repatriated and joined own battery. There were cases of desertion among AA Gunners, Subaltern Mehar Dass was one such, his father had been a VCO and Mehar Dass allegedly attacked own troops as well.

In the post WWII a victory parade was in held in Delhi and services week was celebrated at Poona. For Anti Aircraft Artillery, end of war was also the demised of many batteries and regiments.

## *Chapter Two*

### **Anti-Aircraft - Royal Pakistan Artillery**

In June 1947, the plan to divide the India into two new dominions namely Pakistan and India was approved and steps to divide the military among them started. Military strength was already under disbandment due to end of war and the economics. It was principally agreed that it will be divided on the basis of religion, thus all Muslim regiments were to be allotted to Pakistan and non-Muslims to India. In artillery and in anti-aircraft, the regiments being comprised of batteries based upon the religion thus there were Punjabi Muslim, Sikh, Dogra, Ahir, Ranghar, Madrasi and Brahmin Batteries. In April 1947 before partition plan, Royal Indian Artillery had been reorganised, certain units were disbanded and others were renumbered thus No. 2 HAA Regiment was re-designated as No. 18 HAA. There were one heavy anti-aircraft and three light anti-aircraft regiments in India after the reorganisation (25, 26, 27 LAA and 18 HAA). Pakistan's share of artillery regiments were eight regiments,<sup>30</sup> including mountain, field, medium, anti-tank and anti-aircraft. Two anti-aircraft regiments namely No.18 Heavy Anti-Aircraft and 25 Light Anti-Aircraft were allotted to Pakistan.

#### **Malir- 5 Heavy Anti-Aircraft and 6 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiments.**

Pakistan Army organised newly acquired artillery regiments into a continuous number starting from No.1, thus the two anti-aircraft regiments were given the title of 5 HAA and 6 LAA.<sup>31</sup> 25 LAA was originally organised into 14, 20 and 21 LAA Batteries, among them

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30 Brian Cloughley *A History of The Pakistan Army War and Insurrections* fourth edition Oxford, Karachi, 2013. pp, 2-4.

31 Major General Shaukat Riza retired, *The Pakistan Army 1947-1949*. Services Book Club, Rawalpindi, 1989, p, 187.

only 14 LAA and 21 LAA were comprising of Punjabi Muslims whereas 20 was a Madrasi however only 21 LAA Battery arrived in Pakistan. Captain Khan Zada was the battery commander and Subedar Sagher Khan was the senior junior commissioned officer (SJCO), battery arrived by a special train at Malir on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1947. Within a month two more light anti-aircraft batteries were raised, and they were given the same serials namely 14 and 20. Thus by end October 1947, 6 LAA had three batteries and a regimental headquarters. Among these Ack Ack Batteries, the No.14 LAA Battery has a special place, it was raised mainly from the Muslim gunners who had joined the Pakistan and had previously served in 3 LAA Battery; thus this 14 LAA Battery is an reincarnation of much fame Muslim 3 LAA Battery of No.1 Indian LAA Regiment. This Battery in its original entity was destined for Pakistan but due to upheaval at partition could not arrived at Malir in its true entity; however gunners also brought with them the written record of battery history .

18 HAA was stationed at Khadakvasla near Poona, being part of 11 Army Group Artillery. It comprised of three HAA batteries namely Nos.1,7 and 19. The regiment was earmarked for transfer to Pakistan in June, thus Muslim officers from other Ack Ack regiments were also posted in it. Captain Ashraf was posted from 31 Rajputtana LAA to 18 HAA in early August 1947 and was appointed as adjutant.<sup>32</sup>

Regiment received orders for move to Pakistan on the morning of 29 August 1947, and by evening its very first train under Captain Mumtaz Ansari departed. Guns, radars and vehicles were shifted in this train; it arrived at Malir on 5<sup>th</sup> September after travelling via Bhatinda. Second train also had guns as the main cargo, it arrived at Malir on 8 September with Captain Fazli as the commander. The last train with Major Sher Jang Khan as the commander left Khandwala

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32 Lieutenant Colonel retired Muhammad Ashraf's written account dated 14<sup>th</sup> September 1983.



on 2 September, at Jagaderi a small town near Ambala; it was attacked by a mob of Sikhs. Own troops fired back in self-defence resultantly one Sikh marauder was killed. Train had to break journey to undergo a court of inquiry and reached Malir on 12 September 1947.<sup>33</sup>

Both Ack Ack regiments were stationed at Malir, 5 HAA in Karachi Lines and 6 LAA in Sukkur Lines. Malir was part of Sindh-Balochistan Area which was re-designated as 'Sindh Area'.<sup>34</sup> 8 Infantry Division also had its headquarters at Malir; Major General Muhammad Akbar Khan was the divisional commander. At Malir, 51 Infantry Brigade was also stationed and two of its infantry battalions joined in February 1948.

### **‘Quaid-e-Azam’ Father of Nation’s First Ever Visit to an Army Regiment**

On 11 February 1948, Lieutenant Colonel H.F.C Horne, CO (Commanding Officer) 5 Heavy Anti-Aircraft (5HAA) Regiment Royal Pakistan Artillery, was summoned by Major General Muhammad Akbar Khan, GOC (General Officer Commanding) 8 Division, who apprised the former of his intention of inviting Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for a visit to Malir Cantonment. Elucidating further on the rationale of his decision, the GOC added; only 5 HAA possessed impressive equipment<sup>35</sup> worthy of Father of Nation’s first ever visit to a Pakistan Army Regiment. This visit was important in every sense as Kashmir Campaign was still underway, a day earlier the very first Commander-in-Chief of Royal Pakistan Army, Lieutenant General Frank Messervy had retired and Lieutenant General Douglas Gracey had assumed the command. Lieutenant Ahsan, the Aide-de-Camp (ADC) of governor

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33 Lieutenant Colonel Sher Jung Khan’s written statement, 5 Air Defence Regiment, Digest of Service.

34 Major General Shaukat Riza retired, *The Pakistan Army 1947-1949*, pp,179-180.

35 3.7 inch Vickers was the very latest heavy anti aircraft gun along with radars

general revealed in 1968<sup>36</sup> that the idea of visiting an army regiment originated from governor general's office. Quaid-e-Azam wanted to address the troops, raise the morale of nation and also to convey it across the borders. There is an oral history surrounding this visit too. A Sepoy Adalat Khan of 5 HAA, hailing from Attock during the deployment of regiment at Karachi in aid of civil power in January-February 1948 had stopped the governor general's vehicle and later on being told about the Quaid-e-Azam, innocently invited Father of Nation for a cup of tea with him.<sup>37</sup>

On 12 February 1948, visit was confirmed for 21 February 1948. Although, 7 Battalion, The Baloch Regiment<sup>38</sup> on 15 August 1947 had earned the honour of being the first battalion to present a Guard of Honour to Quaid-e-Azam but the impending visit was destined to be different. Commanding Officer of 5 HAA Regiment apprised Brigadier Findlay, Commander 2 Army Group Royal Pakistan Artillery headquartered at Multan, regarding Quaid-e-Azam's planned visit to the regiment. The 2 AGRPA had very recently moved out from Malir to Multan, now only 5 HAA and 6 LAA were at Malir along with the 7 Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers (REME) workshops. The 6 LAA, due to events at Kashmir had moved its one battery to the operational area.<sup>39</sup>

Brigadier Findlay arrived by train at Malir Cantonment from Multan well in advance; it used to take a day's rail journey. Brigadier Findlay was an enthusiastic character who had immense war experience up his sleeves. He had gallantly fought in the Burma Campaign and suffered injuries when a hand grenade exploded in his hand resulting in loss of his right eye and arm. Visit of governor generals to military establishment and regiments was a regal affair

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36 On 21 February 1968, this time around as Vice Admiral Ahsan, Commander-in-Chief Pakistan Navy, in reminiscence of Quaid's portentous visit to 5 HAA Regiment.

37 Oral History of 5 LAA

38 Now 15 Baluch Regiment

39 6 Light Anti Aircraft Regimental History

before the WWII in India and during the war it was much practical thus a well laid out pattern was in vogue. Governor General's first ever visit to an army regiment was not an isolated act rather the Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan, Defence Secretary Sikander Mirza and senior army commanders were also to be present along with other civilian officials.

After an hour of discussion among the regiment, group and divisional commanders, it was agreed that this will be an exclusive anti-aircraft parade. Quaid-E-Azam on his arrival would be received by the commanding officer of the 5 HAA, a guard of honour, a display of physical training by heavy anti-aircraft gunners, an introductory tour of the radars and heavy guns, review of 5 HAA, 6 LAA and 14 AA (EME) Workshop troops parade and most importantly an address to the troops by the Quaid-e-Azam. Captain (later lieutenant colonel) Muhammad Ashraf, Adjutant 5 HAA Regiment was appointed as the guard commander of the guard of honour.

Lieutenant Commander Syed Muhammad Ahsan (Pakistan Navy, later Chief of Naval Staff), Aide-de-Camp (ADC) to Quaid-e-Azam arrived on 20 February 1948 to the venue and was acquainted with the route, location of special guard of honour, equipment display and the parade ground. Captain Ashraf the adjutant of the regiment recalls *'The whole visit had to be planned keeping in view the fact that Quaid-E-Azam should not have to walk long, also Miss Fatima Jinnah has to be accompanied. Thus it was very meticulous in nature; to show and display the grandeur, scientific, lethality and the professionalism aspect to the great Quaid. The plan was to have the sitting arrangement next to the heavy guns shed in the REME anti-aircraft workshop, with gun display in the vast ground in front. Quaid and Miss Fatima along with other dignitaries to have a round and see it themselves. We all understood the historic importance of this visit, men and other officers had heard about him, it was due to him that the entire sub-continent was divided and we had*

*a new country of our own and yet none of us has ever met him or seen him before. Therefore, there was zeal of enthusiasm, never felt before. Guns and radars were polished; our own uniforms got extra attention. I did ask Lieutenant Commander Ahsan, about the Quaid's cigars as well to which he replied 'do not bother about that'.*<sup>40</sup>

Naik Ghara Khan then sepoy also recalls. 'I was in 6 LAA, We were informed about Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's visit. The preparation for parade continued for many days in the parade ground (presently in front of Gulmohar House, Malir cantonment).'<sup>41</sup>

On 21 February 1948, Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan and other dignitaries arrived at 0930 hours at the venue. At 1000 hours sharp, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah along with his ADC arrived at the venue. There was an overnight rain and as such the markings were made fresh on the ground. Quaid-e-Azam, Miss Fatima Jinnah and ADC stepped out. Lieutenant Colonel Horne and Brigadier Findlay marched in quick steps followed by Major General Akbar Khan and timely received Quaid-e-Azam.

Quaid-e-Azam after shaking hands with the waiting officers, led by his ADC walked directly towards the guard.<sup>42</sup> Captain Ashraf the adjutant, gave the loud command of Present Arms to the guard. Baluch Regiment Band played 'God Save the King' as per the drill customs in vogue then.<sup>43</sup> Hence, the guard of honour by 5 HAA was

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40 Captain (later lieutenant colonel retired) Ashraf interview, written account and video narration, he died in 2008. among all accounts, his is the primary source.

41 Naik Ghara Khan (Retired) is the oldest living soldier of "The Glorious" who joined 6 Light AA Regiment in 1946 at Pune (India) and got retired in 1959. He has the honor to be part of parade of 5 Heavy AA Regiment and 6 Light AA Regiment reviewed by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on 21 February 1948 at Malir Cantonment. He also actively participated in 1948 Kashmir war with the unit in Chakothi, Chanari and Garhi Dopatta sectors being part of 21 Light AA Battery

42 The Pakistan Times, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1948, 'A detachment of 5 Heavy Ack Ack furnished the guard of honour'.

43 Admiral Ahsan during his visit to 5 LAA in 1967 narrated this episode.

inspected by Quaid-e-Azam at 'Present Arms' while the band was still playing 'God Save King' and without the Guard Commander leading the Chief Guest. (A few days after the visit, a developed photograph signed by Quaid-e-Azam was received by 5 HAA Regt<sup>44</sup>.) This became a history and even today only this regiment is allowed to Present Arms to a visiting dignitary.

Dressed in a turquoise coloured sherwani and light grey Jinnah Cap, after inspecting the guard of honour, Quaid-e-Azam proceeded to the dais, shook hands with the dignitaries and took his seat to witness the display of 3.7-inch HAA gun being brought into action. Captain Syed Abid Hussain explained the various actions being carried out to bring the Section in-action. 'Men of 18/5 HAA Battery proved their professional prowess by bringing the gun in-action within five minutes amidst roars and applause from all present at the venue'.<sup>45</sup> Captain Abid highlighted that Ack Ack guns have to fire a 49 pounds shell, 7.5 miles ahead of the enemy aircraft. A physical training display was also given by the troops of 5 HAA Regiment, much lauded by Quaid-e-Azam; he by nature and temperament appreciated people having good physical appearance.<sup>46</sup>

Quaid-e-Azam then walked to the ground accompanied by his sister, commanding officer, brigade commander, divisional commander along with prime minister and defence secretary to have a first-hand knowledge of radar and heavy anti-aircraft guns. He stood next to the 3.7 inch Vickers and inquired about its range and how quickly it can shoot down an enemy aircraft. Major Sher Jung gave the briefing and highlighted the use of height control method.<sup>47</sup>

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44 The only copy of this historic photograph was sent to Artillery Centre, Campbellpur in 1959. Colonel Nanjiani, Commandant Artillery Centre (November 1960 – October 1967) got the photograph painted. Unfortunately, 5 HAA lost the precious photograph in the process.

45 Official History, 5 HAA Regiment.

46 For more on this aspect read Saadat Hasan Manto's narrative narrated by Jinnah's personal driver.

47 Dawn Newspaper Karachi ,22<sup>nd</sup> February 1948.

Miss Fatima Jinnah was curious about the weight of the shells and how many soldiers it takes to load it. She inquired about the food standards ‘these gunners must be given extra food as they pick such heavy shells’.

Quaid walked back and reviewed the march past of anti-aircraft gunners led by Brigadier Findlay. Quaid then addressed the troops of 5 HAA and 6 LAA. ‘On the main parade ground were erected three shamianas against the rugged background of Sind coastal shrublands with denudated age- eaten rocky dunes fringing the skyline’.<sup>48</sup> Apart from ground troops of anti-aircraft regiments, three Dakotas of Royal Pakistan Air Force also flew and dipped their wings. Brass and pipe bands from 2/10 Baloch, 7/10 Baloch and 2/16 Punjab Regiments played marching tunes including Azam-i-Mujahid, Tarana-e-Milli and Quaid-e-Azam; all composed by Subedar Major Muzzaffar Khan of Pakistan Cavalry.<sup>49</sup> Governor General also decorated Subedar Fazl Dad and Jemadar Ghulam Akbar with Order of British India (OBI). Before Quaid’s departure, Major Sher Jung Khan presented a purse contributed by officers and men of the 5 HAA Regiment to the Quaid-e-Azam for the relief fund.

What is interesting though is that towards the end of the visit, when Lieutenant Colonel Horne invited the Quaid for a cup of tea, the latter promptly inquired from his ADC about ‘Soldier, who invited me for a cup of tea, is he present? When informed about his absence, Quaid offered his condolence and politely refused tea. The day 21 February is now celebrated with zeal. President General Zia Ul Haq during Artillery Reunion 1982, agreed to the proposal of 5 LAA to have this honour of presenting guard of honour at ‘Present Arms’. The singular and unique tryst of the Regiment with Quaid-e-Azam stands as an honour sans parallel and continues to serve

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48 Pakistan Times, 22 February 1948.

49 Pakistan Times and Dawn of 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1948.

as an elixir of motivation for the Regiment. Later, as a special case commemorating the memory of the Father of the Nation's historic visit, this faux pas was institutionalized by General Headquarters approving inspection of guard of honour of 5 LAA Regiment (now 5 Light Air Defence , Surface-to-Air Missile) Regiment) at 'Present Arms' by major generals and above.<sup>50</sup>

### **Royal Pakistan Anti-Aircraft Artillery - Kashmir Campaign 1948**

State of Jammu and Kashmir a landlocked Himalayan imperial state among the five hundred odd native states in British India. State of J&K comprised of two main valleys namely Jammu in east and Kashmir in west. Kashmir is overwhelmingly a Muslim majority area and as such they naturally anticipated an accession with Pakistan; it delayed to an extent that Aryan Pathan tribal 'Lashkar' (militia) marched into the valley on hearing tales of their misfortune; in early October 1947 and soon were on the outskirts of Srinagar. On 27 October 1947, Maharajah of Kashmir acceded to India which was accepted by Lord Mountbatten conditionally; subsequently the Indian Army and air force started operating in the Kashmir.<sup>51</sup> On 1 November 1947, Gilgit Scouts commanded by Major William Brown carried out a coup and announced their accession with Pakistan. Tribal Lashkar and Kashmiri freedom fighters had made significant advances into the Kashmir State. Before the end of the year (1947) Indians had poured in three infantry brigades and established a sizeable air force in the State of Jammu & Kashmir.<sup>52</sup>

By end January 1948, it was decided to have anti-aircraft defences for own troops against the Indian Air Force in the conflict. 21 LAA (Battery of 6 LAA (21/6) joined the operations in Kashmir

50 5 Light Air Defence Regiment, official history . 6 Light Air Defence official history.

51 Historical Section Pakistan Army, *The Kashmir Campaign 1947-48*, Services Book Club 1970, p.10

52 *Kashmir Campaign 1947-48*, p-63.

in February 1948 when it was placed under-command No.1 AGRPA being commanded by Brigadier Crawford; battery itself remained within own territory. Battery was moved to Rawalpindi by train and from here it travelled by road to protect the bridges, finally by mules and hauling by men, guns were placed at the peaks.

In April 1948, General Gracey (C-in-C) Pakistan Army put forward his hypothesis ‘ it is obvious that a general offensive is about to start soon...if India is not to be allowed to sit on the doorsteps of Pakistan to the rear and on the flank...it is imperative that the Indian Army is not to be allowed to advance beyond the general line Uri-Poonch- Naushara’.<sup>53</sup> Own 7 and 9 Infantry Divisions were inducted into the Kashmir by May 1948.

Own air force (RPAF) was kept out of the conflict and was involved in the air supply only, these air supply missions started in winter of 1948.<sup>54</sup> On the other hand Indian Air Force was actively supporting the ground forces therefore the role of own anti-aircraft became vital. Kashmir’s geographical layout, communication infrastructure (which was primitive in nature) puts a great value on the few bridges over the River Jhelum specifically the two bridges between Titwal and Muzaffarabad ; thirty miles apart. 21/6 LAA Battery was placed undercommand 4 Mountain Regiment at Kohala. It had two troops of Four Bofors 40 mm Guns and four. 50 machine guns each with an overall manpower of 100 soldiers and other ranks.

## **20MM Light Anti-Aircraft Battery**

During WWII, a healthy number of Kashmiri soldiers had served in AA Artillery, after the war majority had been discharged from service. The political situation forbid the deployment of regular Pakistan Army troops in the Kashmir thus a new anti-aircraft battery

53 Major General Shaukat Riza *The Pakistan Army 1947-1949*, Services Book Club, Rawalpindi, 1989,pp,272-297.

54 Azam Qadri, Muhammad Ali *Sentinels in the Sky, Saga of PAF’s Gallant Air Warriors*. Jang, Lahore, 2015.p-27.



was raised comprising entirely of Kashmiri men. Enrolment call was made and these veterans now joined the freedom battle. On 16<sup>th</sup> May 1948 a new anti-aircraft battery was raised with these veterans, it was simply known as 20 mm Light Anti-Aircraft Battery. It was equipped with four 20 mm guns, Honorary Captain Khan Gul was the pioneer commander, Soon after it's raising, the Battery took over local defence duties of Muzaffarabad including Domel, Kohala and Neelum bridges.

A week after the raising of the 20mm AA Battery the Indians took hold of the Titwal. Own 101 Brigade was deployed in Titwal, Uri, Kohala and Bagh areas whereas 10 Brigade was in Poonch. The headquarters of brigades and divisions moved frequently keeping in line with the changes in the tactical situation.

### **Battle of Uri-August 1948**

Uri a small town on the road to Srinagar, in Poonch district was besieged by freedom fighter in the winter of 1947; in the summer of 1948, Indians made an all out effort to occupy the garrison.<sup>55</sup>

23 August 1948 was a red-letter day in Kashmir Campaign, Indian aircraft joined the ongoing battle in Muzaffarabad sector and rocketed its defences. The first air-sortie of the enemy assault on the front came at about 0800 hours and a grave struggle ensued. Three successive air-sorties were targeted before the enemy's fourth sortie appeared on the scene. The gun detachments had to quickly respond and they did, amazingly losing nothing but securing three devastating hits against the enemy's attacking aircraft. Lieutenant Khan Gul, Naik Gunner Noor Khan and Gunner Sultan Khan distinguished in the action.<sup>56</sup>

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55 Historical Section Pakistan Army, *The Kashmir Campaign 1947-48*, Services Book Club 1970, p.72

56 Regimental History 148 Air Defence Regiment.

5 Heavy Ack Ack was ordered to move into the Kashmir Campaign' Border Defence Operation', in order to counter the Indian air force intrusion. On 29 August 1948, 12 Heavy AA Battery moved by train from Malir to Lahore and by last week of November it arrived in Kashmir and on 4 December, A Troop undercommand Captain Abid Hussain occupied defensive position near Babot Village. For next one week 5-14 December 1948, this heavy battery came under Indian air force attack but no damage was done, guns did not fire on the attacking aircraft as fire was to be opened only on written orders.<sup>57</sup> On 14 December 1948, an enemy air observation aircraft Auster, which was flying to register the ground targets for their field artillery, came into scene; Auster conducted two lethal aerial shoots which caused damage to the 7 Field Regiment. Lieutenant Colonel Jarvis commanding officer of the 7 Field contacted Brigadier Crawford (commander artillery) and resultantly the Ack Ack battery received orders to fire back on the Indian aircraft.

Auster is a slow moving aircraft and no match for the heavy anti-aircraft fire, 12 Battery in the absence of any meteorological data set approximate calculations on the mechanical computer and first round was fired, in the next volley the Auster was practically blasted in the sky. Indians retaliated with an air attack comprising a flight of three Furry aircraft at 1300 hours. Layout of the ground is such in Kashmir that the attacking aircraft had to attack precise and low to cause any worthwhile damage to own troops. In the second run, one of the Furry was hit by own anti-aircraft artillery and was seen going down behind the hills<sup>58</sup>; 'Furry caught fire and came down in the nullah beyond Tavi'. Indians were bent upon to neutralize the anti-aircraft fire thus at 1500 another flight of attacking aircraft came from Akhnoor direction, own flak opened up at long range

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57 5 Light Ack Ack Regimental History.

58 War Diaries of 5 HAA, 6 LAA and 20 LAA

compelling Indians to fly high and also to break up their formation. One of the Indian aircraft was hit<sup>59</sup> and it crashed near an Azad Kashmir regiment. At 1700 hours, All India Radio confirmed the shooting down of their own aircraft and also highlighted that one Heavy anti-aircraft regiment has been deployed by Pakistanis.<sup>60</sup>

Weather was extremely cold with heavy snowfall, line of communication on own side were still under progress, thus own air force undertook supply missions dropping vital supplies through parachutes. It was not a very reliable mean yet it was the only option available. Life pattern in among the anti-aircraft batteries varied, heavy battery with more manpower was compact in deployment, light anti-aircraft was spread over, with guns protecting the bridges. Anti-Aircraft guns had one distinct advantage over the other firearms, they were firing in anti-aircraft and ground role both with devastating effects. A field artillery gun has to rely upon an observer to fire beyond the mountains and hills, an Ack Ack gun on the other hand was engaging the enemy fortifications with direct observations. Cease Fire was agreed between Pakistan and India under the UNO and came into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1949. The very first Sitara-e-Jurat and three Tamgha-e-Jurats were awarded to the 20mm LAA Battery, later it became 82 LAA Battery and finally merged into present 148 Light Air Defence Regiment.

### **3 Army Group ‘Hurrial’ Royal Pakistan Artillery**

On 21 April 1950, a new formation No.3 AGRPA was raised at Malir Cantonment (Karachi); an exclusive anti-aircraft formation.<sup>61</sup> Very next day a new regiment 13 LAA was raised at Peshawar (22 April 1950), this regiment was raised primarily to protect the RPAF in the north thus Peshawar. Major Akbar Ali Shah was the

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59 War Diaries of 5 HAA, 6 LAA and 20 LAA

60 Regimental History 5 Light Ack Ack and hand written notes of Captain Abid.

61 Ministry of Defence (Army Branch) No.0556/37/artillery dated 22 April 1950.

raising officer, he was commanding a battery as well. Two LAA Batteries No. 14 and No. 20 were transferred from 6 LAA and a new battery No. 33 LAA was raised as well. Being the first AA regiment to be raised after independence, thus a new set of traditions were introduced which includes writing all names and appointments in Urdu rather than English as in vogue in other AA and army regiments; this tradition is still being followed and 13 LAA is the only regiment in Pakistan Army which follows this pattern.

The existing Ack Ack regiments including 5 HAA ( 12, 18 and 24 anti-aircraft batteries), 6 LAA (21, 34, and 46 AA batteries) and 13 LAA (14,20 and 33 AA Batteries) were placed undercommand. Its area of command thus stretched from Peshawar in north (13 LAA) to Karachi in south (5 HAA and 6 LAA). The group was the third group in Pakistan Artillery, the other two being No.1 and No.2 both were in support of field formations whereas this (No.3 AGRPA) was meant to support the Pakistan Air Force and defend the air bases. A strong bond thus developed between the ack ack gunners and air force pilots by virtue of close cooperation. RPAF had its headquarters at Peshawar.

Lieutenant Colonel Calver, who was commanding 6 LAA assumed the officiating command of the newly raised group on 1 May 1950 and handed over to Brigadier F.B.Pinchart in the last week of September 1950. The new commander Brigadier Pinchart was on a contract for three years with Pakistan Army and arrived by ship along with his family from London. Major S.M.A Shirazi, Captain Sakhi Muhammad, Captain Mehdi Jaffri and Major Inayat Ullah were the pioneer staff officers of the new group. In January 1954, No.3 AGRPA was converted into 3 Anti-Aircraft Brigade and in June 1966 it became an Independent Anti-Aircraft Artillery Brigade.

## **45 Independent Light Anti-Aircraft Battery**

To cater for the anti-aircraft defence of East Pakistan, an anti-aircraft battery No.45, was raised at Malir in May 1950 and by end of October same year was shipped to Dacca under command Major Abdullah. The battery was given a warm send off at the Karachi port. The battery after arriving at East Pakistan was stationed at the Dacca airfield, equipped with 40 mm Bofors. Manpower and officers were mainly from Punjab and as such were rotated on regular basis.

### **1951; a year to remember**

New Year eve of 1951 was on Saturday and was celebrated with traditional fun at the anti-aircraft mess in Malir: it continued till wee hours. The dawn of New Year brought new hope and dreams yet none imagined the chain of events that will be played in the year by the divine hand. Khawaja Nazimuddin was the governor general with Liaquat Ali Khan as the prime minister. Pakistan's relation with India were improving after the pact in 1950 but they were still rocky. On the international level, war in Korea had started.

### **General Douglas Gracey's Farewell Parade-1951**

General Douglas Gracey was the last of the British commander-in-chief of Pakistan Army, he paid a farewell visit to the 3 AGRPA at Malir. A smart parade was held in his honour on 10 January, in the 6 LAA parade ground in which troops from 5 HAA also took part. General Gracey decorated Major S.M.A Sherazi with mention in despatches (MID) and Subedar Muhammad Khan of 6 LAA with Medal of British Empire (MBE). It is worth highlighting that on 17 January, General Ayub Khan assumed the command of Pakistan Army.

February was spent in training by both 5 HAA and 6 LAA at Thatta, sixty miles north-east of Malir. Regiments carried out

deployment drills and later Brigadier Pinchard visited and stayed at the camp. The training was enjoyable although no actual firing was involved yet more stress was on gun drills. There were games in the evening and a hockey match was played between officers and junior commissioned officers (JCOs). Brigadier Pinchard played rather captained JCOs team and scored two out the three goals scored including the winning one. Shikar of birds was another enjoyable event, ‘ a shikar was organised in his honour( Brigadier Pinchard) but it seemed the birds had been warned by Radar as they steered clear off the shikaries, who were greatly disappointed’.<sup>62</sup>

The very first of its kind exercise code name Hurrial was conducted between 19-22 March 1951. Officers from all three services took part in it, aim of the exercise was to test and practice the communication, passing of orders to the guns. In May, Brigadier Morley the Director of Artillery visited both the Ack Ack regiments

In July 1951, the turbulent and strained relationships with India reached a point where all other commitments including the annual inspection of the ack ack regiments were put on hold. ‘An operational immediate signal was received at the headquarters of the Hurrial on the evening of 17<sup>th</sup> July at 1700 hours’.<sup>63</sup> Immediately a battery of 5 HAA was ordered to move to Sargodha, it had Matador tractors, LAA had Chevrolete 8440 and Ford tractors.<sup>64</sup> HAA reached Sargodha next evening. The high alert remained till end August, during which two new anti-aircraft regiments were raised in July. First, 20 Heavy (static) Anti-Aircraft was raised on 1 July followed by 19 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment on 15 July 1951; both were initially on paper only. As the situation returned to normal on eastern borders, both these regiments were formally raised in August with manpower started pouring in till end of year.

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62 Digest of Service, No.3 AGRPA, p-45.

63 War Diary No.3 AGRPA.

64 Pakistan Army Special Part One Orders, 1950. Appendix A

## **19 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment**

It was formally raised on 17 August 1951 by none other than Lieutenant Colonel J.W.Calver; he had already raised and commanded 6 LAA and Anti-Aircraft School. The major armaments on the inventory of the Regiment were 40 Millimeter towed and 20 Millimeter Oerlikon Swiss Guns. Three LAA Batteries (48, 49 and 50) along with an Anti-Aircraft workshop of Electrical, Mechanical Engineering Type 'B' and an Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Signal Sections were integral part of the regiment.

## **Raising of 20 (Static) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment**

The very first heavy anti-aircraft regiment to be raised after the independence was on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1951 at Malir. War with India was a reality and it was taken as such by the government and subsequently the threat of air attack was given due weightage. The commanders in army, air force and navy along with the majority of the senior officers especially in air force were British having seen the impact of air attack on the capital during the last Great War. A static heavy anti-aircraft regiment primarily differs from a similar mobile regiment in terms of manpower and transport; along with the carriage of the 3.7 inch guns.

20 HAA (static) Regiment was raised on 27 August 1951, it had eight 3.7 inch guns. Regiment was entrusted with the defence of Karachi, the city itself was divided into four sectors, and these eight guns organised in pairs were deployed. The 20 HAA (static) Regiment, in April 1953 was reduced to cadre, and all guns were deposited in the Central Ordnance Depot at Drigh Road. This change of heart came mainly due to the concept of reduction and reorganisation in army by General Ayub Khan. The Regiment for over two years remained in a state of limbo, only one battery

remained active acting as a training battery. On 30 November 1956, the 20 HAA was reactivated with its integral and original 51, 52, and 53 HAA Batteries which were all static . It is worth highlighting that Lieutenant Colonel Y.S. Nanjiani was the very first commanding officer of the regiment, he later retired as brigadier and more importantly he remained as commandant of artillery training centre at Campbellpur for well over seven years.

Year 1951, also saw the very first move of an ack ack regiment when 6 LAA left Malir and settled at Rawalpindi in October; it remained stationed at Rawalpindi for another decade before falling back to Malir in 1964. Shortly after arriving of 6 LAA at Rawalpindi, the country underwent a tragedy when it's first prime minister. Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan was assassinated at Rawalpindi on 16 October 1951, as a result Khawaja Nazimuddin became the prime minister and in his place Ghulam Muhammad was appointed as governor general of Pakistan. 'On 16<sup>th</sup> October 1951, a troop of 5 HAA gave a 31 gun salute at the funeral of Mr Liaquat Ali Khan , prime minister of Pakistan'.<sup>65</sup>

### **Life in Ack Ack- Royal Days**

Anti-Aircraft regiments were based at Malir and as Karachi was the capital, they were also looking after the protocol. 5 HAA fired 101 guns salute on the sad demise of father of the nation in September 1948; same regiment also fired 31 guns salute on the arrival of Shahenshah of Iran in Karachi. Thus on every important event, whether it is the arrival, departure of a dignitary or a national event, anti-aircraft regiments especially 5 HAA by virtue of its firepower was always in forefront. The Independence Day celebrations included a parade, Brigadier Pinchard led the parade on 14 August 1952, salute was taken by the Governor General. 'The

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65 Digest of Service, 3 AGRPA, p-99.



remarkable show of the both heavy and light ack ack duly enhanced by the turn out and discipline of officers and men elicited great applause from the watching crowd'.<sup>66</sup>

The basic doctrine of anti-aircraft in Pakistan at that time was based, nurtured, commanded and revolved around the British model and equipment. Pakistan unfortunately did not have the same resources as enjoyed by British, on the other hand Pakistan fortunately also did not have the same aerial threat as United Kingdom had faced. Anti-Aircraft were thus deployed for protection of air fields at Karachi, Sargodha, Lahore and Peshawar. Threat to Pakistan in early years was not only from India but also from Afghanistan. In 1948, parliament had passed an act under which National Guards were raised; apart from other activities National Guards regularly conducted drills of blackout in major cities. The first major step was the establishment of a sector headquarters at Karachi (Clifton) in 1950, and they were responsible for early detection and passing of data regarding intruder to own guns.

Officers were being posted fresh from Pakistan Military Academy and also inter-posted from anti-tank and field artillery regiments and vice versa. Manpower came from the artillery centre; recruits were overwhelmingly uneducated, from rural areas and had seldom seen an aircraft. They were trained extensively in the recognition of aircraft. Firing was the apex of training and was conducted only at Karachi thus anti-aircraft regiment in Peshawar and independent battery at Kashmir had to move by train to Karachi for the said training. This firing was also the apex and high point of Karachi's social life, dignitaries including governor general and other high civilian and military officials along with foreign diplomats were invited as guest to witness the anti-aircraft guns firing. There was stiff competition among the regiments in winning the laurel in front of a colourful crowd, sleeves flown by the RPAF aircraft were

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66 Ibid.

the targets, HAA would fire on imaginary targets and so would the Bofors Guns.

### **General Ayub Khan's visit to 5 HAA, 19 LAA and 20 HAA**

General Ayub Khan was the very first Pakistani Commander in Chief, he later rose to the rank of field marshal and also became the president of the country from 1958-1968. On 19 August 1952 at Malir he first visited 20 HAA. He was given a demonstration of visual and unseen aerial targets by 51 and 52 HAA Batteries. General Ayub Khan also visited 19 LAA and 'went around the training classes and later remarked 'Extremely Good'.<sup>67</sup> Lieutenant Aslam Mahmood Hayat a tall officer over six feet, gave the briefing to the commander-in-chief on the guns. General Ayub was much impressed with the turnout and bearing of this young subaltern to an extent that Lieutenant Hayat was soon selected to undergo his Gunnery Staff Course at Woolwich (England) and he still holds the distinction of being the youngest officer to pass this course. Lieutenant Hayat was later retained at UK as an instructor for six months. It is worth highlighting that years later, he not only commanded School of Anti-Aircraft Artillery, an anti-aircraft brigade but also became the second general officer commanding of anti-aircraft artillery AA Command. His eldest son General Zubair Hayat himself a gunner remained Chairman Joint Chief of Staff Committee (2016-2019).

### **1953**

Sargodha which at present is the heart of our airforce also remained an integral part of AAA, the very first exercise at Sargodha was conducted in December 1953, code name Tulip. 6 LAA Regiment RPA with subsidiary detachments from 13 and 19 LAA Regiments RPA moved to Sargodha. The object of the exercise was to practice the operational units of No-1 Group RPAF in their war time role and

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67 19 SP (LAA) Digest of Service

also to test the efficiency of LAA defence for Sargodha Airfield and to exercise the RPA personnel in OP procedures and employment of LAA. The secondary object of the exercise was to finalise the LAA gun positions for Sargodha airfield to be used in case of war. Both officers and the troops taking part got lot of practical training.<sup>68</sup>

1954 is a historical year, as on 26 January 1954, the 3 AGRPA was re-designated as 3 Anti-Aircraft Brigade Royal Pakistan Artillery with Brigadier Elliot as the commander.

The first major task undertaken was on 26 February 1954, when trials of a new gun **30 MM Hispano** Suiza were conducted at Clifton AA ranges. The results obtained were better than the trials conducted with the same guns in 1953. This time, the guns were modified and as such showed greater accuracy than the last year. Three Services Chiefs, Defence Secretary, Commander 3 AA Brigade and various other representatives of RPA, Army and RPAF witnessed the trials.<sup>69</sup>

In 1954, a Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement was signed between Pakistan and USA and later Pakistan joined Southeast Asia Collective Defence Treaty initially known as Manila Pact but later as SEATO in February 1955. Pakistan also joined Baghdad Pact later renamed as CENTO in 1955. The main theme of all these pacts was to fight the communism, resultantly military aid started pouring and collective exercises were conducted between the member countries. Anti-Aircraft was logically a priority along with aircraft itself. Two LAA Regiments (29 LAA and 36 LAA) were raised in Pakistan which were wholly equipped with American weapons and they also adopted the doctrine that comes with the weapon system. For armoured division which was also raised under the aid an AA (SP) regiment was raised (19 SP, LAA).

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68 Digest of Service, 3 AGRPA

69 Digest of Service 3 AGRPA

## **29 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment -1957**

The Regiment along with Light Aid Detachment Electrical and Mechanical Engineering and Signal Section was raised with effect from 15 August 1957 under Headquarters 3 Anti-Aircraft Brigade Artillery at Malir Cantonment. 32 x .50 Quad Guns were collected from Central Ordnance Depot Rawalpindi and arrived in the unit on 24 November 1957. Later seven 40mm guns were also issued to the regiment.

Manpower came from the five Anti-Aircraft regiments of 3 AA Brigade. 29 LAA had different role and as such different organisation and weapons. It was meant to support the field formation thus more mobile. Initially it was raised under the AA Brigade but was soon detached from it and stationed at Multan. Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ayub Khan posted from 19 LAA Regiment Artillery assumed the command of the regiment with effect from 17 September 1957. The pioneers include Major A.R.Hayat as second in command (2IC), Captain Abdul Qadir as adjutant, and Captain Syed Bukhari as quartermaster. The four LAA Batteries (109,110,111 and 112) were raised and commanded by Major Saidal Khan, Major Asad Khan, Major Ayub Khan and Major N.Mirza respectively. Other officers included were Captain Syed Naqvi, Captain Sarfraz, Captain Sardar Ali and Captain Chughtai

## **36 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment -1958**

36 LAA was raised on 1 March 1958 at Malir Cantonment with four LAA Batteries (132,133,134 and 135). Lieutenant Colonel Sher Jang commanded it from raising till December 1959, Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Durrani took over the command and remained in command till September 1966. Major Sultan Hussain was the first second in command and Captain Muhammad Afzal (later major general) was the first adjutant. Subedar Major Rehman Khan was

the very first SM of the regiment. 36 LAA soon moved from Malir to Multan and later to Mansar camp. It is worth highlighting that 36 LAA was also a mobile AA Regiment thus equipped with .50 Quad and 40mm guns. An AN-TPS-1 radar was also an integral part of the Corps LAA regiments. This radar had a range of 120 nautical miles; it could detect a bomber at 10,000 feet and worked on L – Band (1220-1280 MHz).

### **First Self Propelled LAA Regiment -1959**

In 1959, an Anti-Aircraft regiment was to be converted into a Self-Propelled Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. Every Anti-Aircraft unit wanted to be bestowed with this honour. Hence, it was decided that firing competition between 5 LAA, 6 LAA, 13 LAA and 19 L AA be organized and the unit securing first position be converted to self-propelled. 19 LAA Regiment achieved this singular honour by securing first position. Subsequently, the regiment got converted into 19(Self Propelled) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Artillery on 24 December 1959. Following Self Propelled guns were issued to the Regiment, 40 Millimetre (twin) mounted on carriage M-19A1 and .50 Quad Guns on M16A1. It was major milestone for the AA, now it became an integral part of the strike formation. Soon after conversion, 19 (SP) LAA was put under the command of 1 Armoured Division and as such its link with 3 AA Brigade became nominal. In the same time period, 1959-60, the HAA guns were deposited in ordnance depots and two HAA regiments namely 5 HAA and 20 HAA were also converted into LAA regiments.

## *Chapter Three*

### **Anti-Aircraft in 1965 War**

The 3 Anti-Aircraft Brigade comprising of (5 LAA, 6 LAA, 13 LAA, 20 LAA, regiments, and 82 LAA Independent Battery) was the only Ack Ack formation of Pakistan Army and it was responsible for the defence of PAF airbases and radars. For field army, 29 LAA and 36 LAA regiments were integral part of the lone army corps; whereas 19 (SP) LAA was the sole anti-aircraft defence available to the only armoured division held by Pakistan Army. All of the above mentioned anti-aircraft regiments were stationed in West Pakistan. All anti-aircraft regiments' undercommand 3 AA Brigade were equipped with 40 mm Bofors single barrel and 20 mm quadruple cannons. The lone SP (LAA) had 40mm Bofors mounted on M19AI tracks and .50 Quad on M16AI trucks. Each LAA Battery apart from guns also had a Radar type 4, with a range of forty Kilometres.

In 1960, the HAA guns(3.7 inch) along with their Radars were deposited in the ordnance depots and as such there was no medium or high altitude air defence available for the air bases or the field formation. Tactically, it was hypothesised that in any future conflict with India the threat from IAF will be low level and as such the utility of 3.7 inch guns have outlived their utility; later events proved this hypothesis as partially correct. There were two mobile corps LAA Regiments (29 LAA and 36 LAA) they had .50 Quad cannons, each regiment having 32 in number along with eight pairs of 40m Bofors making a total of 48 guns and cannons . All other LAA Regiments (5 LAA,6 LAA,13 LAA,20 LAA) had 32 guns of 40mm Bofors and sixteen cannons.

## **Rann of Kutch - 1965**

Relationship between Pakistan and India started deteriorating over the dispute of administrative boundaries of Sindh and Bombay marked during British Raj era. Rann of Kutch is a desolate, salty, void of water and life, a desert terrain which lies 200 nautical miles north east of Karachi. In May 1965, the dispute reached to a point where both countries initiated deployment of troops. 3 AA Brigade issued its operational instructions on 5 May 1965 and within a day 5 LAA was deployed at Korangi and Badin whereas 6 LAA was deployed at Mauripur Air Base. In North, 29 LAA also moved and occupied its operational positions which were astride the bridges on River Jhelum and Chenab. 36 LAA was moved initially to protect the bridges at Chiniot, 1 Armoured Division also left its peace location and 19 (SP) LAA also moved out with its parent formation. 13 LAA was deployed at Peshawar and Risalpur airfields.

During Rann of Kutch conflict in 1965, 36 LAA moved to Rahim Ki Bazar on 23 April 1965 to provide AA cover to the artillery supporting the troops in the sector. On 9 May 1965, PAF asked for dispatch of one AA battery to East Pakistan. Accordingly 24 LAA Battery ex 5 Light AA Regiment, already deployed at Korangi, and commanded by Captain Muhammad Afzal Khan (who later became Major General and General Officer Commanding AA Command in late 70s) was sent to Dhaka by sea by private cargo ship Abasin on 12 May 1965. The battery reached there as scheduled and reported in action at 1400 hours on 23 May at Dhaka Air Base. The battery was given the task of providing AA protection to PAF Base Dhaka more specifically the airfield. The battery spent over 6 months under canvas.

There was no air war during the Rann of Kutch conflict; it was decided by both air chiefs of PAF and IAF, not to employ the

fighter jets in order to contain the conflict.<sup>70</sup> By mid-June a cease fire was agreed upon and AA Regiments soon moved back to their peace location less 19 (SP) LAA which remained deployed with the armoured division. It was the first operational test of 3 AAA Brigade and many lessons were learnt from this deployment; in short it was a blessing in disguise. Troops after arrival in peace locations were soon sent on a well-deserved leave as per the standard operating procedures.

### **Operation Gibraltar and Grand Slam**

Operation Gibraltar was the codename for Pakistan's support for the Kashmiri mujahedeen fighting for their right of self-determination against the occupied Indian military in Jammu and Kashmir. It was perceived at the planning level that Indians will react to this, thus all contingencies were considered. 29 LAA was at Mansar Camp where it had relieved the 36 LAA in June 1964; former had been stationed at Multan undercommand 1 Corps Artillery but now placed as part of 4 Corps Artillery. On 4 May 1965, 29 LAA was put on a twelve hours' notice, regiment's tasks were to provide anti-aircraft protection to the bridges on River Ravi, Chenab and Jhelum and also to the Pakistan Army tactical headquarters setup at Kharian. 29 LAA was organised into four batteries and equipped with 40mm Bofors anti-aircraft guns and also with .50 quad. Lieutenant Colonel A.R.Hayat's plan was to have No.109 LAA Battery on River Jhelum, 110 Battery on Chenab River, 111 battery for the defence of Kharian and 112 LAA Battery on River Ravi, he placed his headquarters at River Chenab. On 4<sup>th</sup> May, much before dawn, regiment received orders to move immediately and occupy its defensive positions which it did by mid day. Regiment soon had to readjust its positions as the situation change, 112 Battery had to move from Ravi Bridges to Rahwali in support of headquarters 6 Armoured Division; after

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70 JJhon Fricker *Battle for Pakistan* (Surrey, Allen, 1979), pp.42-50.



few days it was placed under command 4 Corps artillery. 29 LAA headquarters also move in area Bhai Pheru in support of 7 infantry Division. Situation died down and complete regiment move back to its peace location on 11 July 1965.

### **111 LAA Battery (29 LAA) and Operation Gibraltar**

On 18 July 1965, once again the 29 LAA was ordered to move but this time only one battery was required, thus 111 Battery arrived at Kharian at 1500 hours on 21 July 1965, with the task of providing anti-aircraft protection to 11 Cavalry during the operations.’ Uptill 12 August, 111 Battery carried out liaison with 11 Cavalry and carried out reconnaissance of various concentration areas including Daulatnagar and Pero Shah.<sup>71</sup> However on 13 August 1965, the battery was given a fresh task to provide anti-aircraft protection to 28 Medium Regiment which also had a battery of 10 Medium; 39 Field and 2 Field were the other artillery units which also came under the protection zone of this battery. Eight Bofors (40 mm) were earmarked for the protection of 28 Medium and .50 Quads were distributed, four each for the 39 and 2 Field Regiments.

### **82 LAA ‘Chinari’ Battery**

In June 1949, 20mm LAA Battery was re-designated and amalgamated into Azad Kashmir Regular Force as 82 Light Anti-Aircraft Azad Kashmir Battery,<sup>72</sup> while remaining on the ORBAT of Headquarters 12 Division at Chinar Camp Muzaffarabad, Azad Kashmir. On 10 August 1965, Major Muhammad Ikram Hashmi, Battery Commander 82 LAA Battery was designated to enroll 700 Razakars in view of impending hostilities. Major Hashmi played an important role in the Operation Gibraltar, he motivated the locals in joining the freedom movement. Battery itself was deployed at

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71 29 LAA Digest of Service.

72 Digest of Service 148 Light Air Defence Regiment.

the vital bridges at Azad Pattan, Kohala and Muzaffarabad. Chinari Battery was equipped with Bofors and 20mm guns.

On the morning of 13 August, 111 LAA Battery moved alongwith the affiliated regiments to Gujrat, then drove on Gujrat-Bhimber road and reached Paddhar. Soon after arrival and getting into position, own artillery started shelling Indian known positions at Dewa, Burejat, Lalial, Red Hill and Chamb. There was no Indian air attack on own positions and battle confined to artillery shelling. Own artillery kept on changing battle positions and resultantly the 111 LAA Battery also shifted its troops and guns.

Back at Mansar, the peace location, another battery 110 LAA Battery was also placed on 12 hours' notice and very next day this battery also arrived at battle field. Although there was no Indian air attack however enemy artillery carried out artillery air bursts on own positions. On 27 August, both AA batteries of 29 LAA regiment were in position at Kotla.

### **Operation Grand Slam 1-5 September 1965.**

Anti-Aircraft regiments undercommand 3 AA Brigade received their warning orders for deployment at twelve hours' notice on 19 and 20 August 1965. Brigade itself along with its regiments was deployed at Karachi, 13 LAA was at Peshawar. The LAA regiments in support of field and armoured formation were not undercommand the 3 AA Brigade and as such these regiments moved into operational areas on the orders of corps and divisional staff officers.

By last light of 31 August, 29 LAA was in Kharian and established its headquarters at Padhar; its 112 LAA Battery was tasked to provide anti-aircraft protection to GHQ thus it stayed at transit camp Rawalpindi.

On 1 September Operation Grand Slam was launched by Pakistan Army, aim was to press an advance towards the Akhnur in occupied Kashmir thus threatening lines of communication of Indian Army. The very first dog fight between PAF and IAF took place at 1730 hours, in which IAF lost four aircraft. This aerial fight had a demoralising effect on IAF and for next four days it remained out of the contest. The very first day of Operation Grand Slam started with own artillery guns shelling on Indian positions at Dewa, Munnawar and Chamb. *‘There was an enemy air attack of four Vampires in the morning and four Hunters in the evening, LAA opened up’.*<sup>73</sup> Naik Piran Ditta of 110 LAA Battery was injured due to enemy air attack, one gun of 28 Medium was also damaged.

Although the ground operation took place in north, yet 3 AA Brigade put all its undercommand regiments on high alert and by first light 1 September 1965, Mauripur and Sargodha airbases were well under LAA protective umbrella so were the radar stations at Sakesar in north and Badin in south. Regiments carried out their battle drills and established command posts. LAA guns were deployed on a flat surface with an all-round observation in order to achieve a greater field of fire. Guns were deployed in pair, each pair having a 40 mm Bofors and a 20mm cannon.

As own troops advance so did the LAA Batteries, 110 LAA Battery was advancing with 28 Medium regiment. The tactics and deployment drills were to occupy grounds around own artillery regiment, and deployed the LAA guns in cluster. Communication was a weak link thus fire was on orders of officers. Troops were well trained in identifying a hostile aircraft. Own Army Aviation L-19 aircraft were flying quite extensively for air observation therefore firing discipline was a necessity ; it goes to the credit of LAA gunners that no such incident of friendly fire occurred during the operations.

73 War Diary 29 LAA.

## 6 September 1965

The deployment of the anti-aircraft regiments on the morning of the 6 September 1965 when Indian forces suffering major setback in Grand Slam crossed over international border east of Lahore without any warning; were as under

**5 LAA.** Undercommand Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ashraf, he was in command since May 1961. Regiment had one battery ( 12 LAA Battery) at Korangi and other (18 LAA Battery) was deployed at Badin. It was having only two batteries as its third battery 24 LAA Battery was transitioned into an independent LAA battery and sailed to Dacca in May 1965. A third battery No.153 LAA was raised on 10 September 1965 and it was deployed at Risalpur. 5 LAA was stationed at Malir and remained deployed during Rann of Kutch, it had partially returned to peace location at Malir. On 30 August 1965 it again occupied its operational locations.

**6 LAA.** Regiment was being commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Akhtar Ahmed Khan having 21,34 and 50 LAA Batteries. Regiment remained deployed during Rann of Kutch from 15 April 1965 onwards it remained deployed till 3 July 1965 at Mauripur air field. Regiment had a month of rest at Malir in which troops were sent on much due leave when again it was put on 24 hours notice on 19 August 1965. Finally on 30 August 1965 at 1000 hours it received orders to be in action at Mauripur by last light 31 August. 'Regiment being semi mobile, move was planned in two shifts. First line ammunition was issued to guns...by last light 31 August 1965, regiment was in action'.<sup>74</sup>

**13 LAA** was being commanded by Lieutenant Colonel A.B.Nasir, having three LAA Batteries. No 14 LAA was put undercommand 20 LAA Regiment at Sargodha, No 20 LAA Battery was deployed at

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74 War Diary 6 LAA

Peshawar and 33 LAA Battery was providing defence to PAF Radar station at Sakesar.

**19 (SP) LAA** was the only self-propelled anti-aircraft regiment of Pakistan Army; entrusted for the protection of armoured division. Regiment had converted into SP on 24 December 1959, equipped with 40 mm Twin Bofors mounted on M-19A1 carriage and 50 Quad mounted on M16A1 carriage. From its conversion in 1959 till June 1964 it was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Nazir Ahmed and Lieutenant Colonel Sarwar Khan took command in June 1964 and remained in command till September 1967. Regiment was already deployed with armoured division since May 1965. It had four batteries, 48, 49, 50 and 51 supported by an AA Signals section and a detachment of EME (type B). *It was good to have left the peace location four months before the war; 'open air living and occasional changes in location produced a healthy atmosphere and morale. Sports facilities in the form of swimming, volleyball were available in the camp, fruits and other edibles could be obtained at cheaper rates, civil authorities and local population made it even more happy by their cheerful cooperation'.*<sup>75</sup>

Two LAA (SP) Batteries deployed at Kot Radha Krishan and Changa Manga were concentrated and carried out a well-organized individual training, other two batteries deployed at Pattoki conducted training on troop level during summer. 'A continuous wireless silence was imposed soon after the unit left its peace location which lasted for four months'.<sup>76</sup> In terms of equipment it had deficiency of three M19A1 and equal number in M16A1, the tracks of later were in bad state and could not be replaced but they lasted throughout the war.

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75 War Diary 19 SP LAA

76 War Diary 19 SP LAA.

## 20 LAA

Regiment was originally raised as heavy anti-aircraft at Malir and was transitioned into a LAA Regiment on 1 March 1960 equipped with 40 mm Bofors. On the eve of war it was stationed at Kohat Cantonment. Lieutenant Colonel Noor Muhammad Gondal was in command; unit had three LAA Batteries numbered as 51, 52 and 53. Regiment received its operational orders at 1630 hours on 29 August 1965 to provide AA Defence at Sargodha air field. Two special trains left Kohat railway station on the night of 29/30 August with the regiment and a ground party left Kohat at 0530 hours on 30 August and the whole regiment reassembled at Sargodha on the evening of 30 August 1965.

**24 Independent LAA Battery.** This battery was an integral unit of 5 LAA and remained deployed at Korangi Creek from 18 April 1965 providing anti-aircraft defences to the SOC at Korangi Creek during Rann of Kutch . On 10 May 1965 , Battery received orders to move to Dacca and on 12 May it sailed along with its equipment and guns to Dacca. Major Faiz Brandon who was recently posted from Air Observation Post (AOP) was designated as the battery commander, he however availed one month long awaited leave and during his leave the war started and the air links between the two wings was disrupted thus Captain Afzal (later GOC AA) officiated the battery. Battery had eighteen 40mm Bofors, one radar and overall strength of 211 all ranks. 24 LAA Battery was placed under command 14 Division at Dacca and was deployed at Tejgaon air field (Dacca). Apart from Captain (PA 4589) Afzal Khan, Captain (PA 6569) Aijaz Ahmed Khan and Lieutenant (PA 6890) Manzoor Ul Haq were the other officers of the 24 Independent LAA Battery during the war.<sup>77</sup>

**29 LAA Regiment** undercommand Lieutenant Colonel A.R.Hayat who was in command since November 1960, with No

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<sup>77</sup> War Diary 24 Independent LAA Battery

109, 110, 111 and 112 LAA Batteries. Regiment was supporting the 4 Corps operations in Sialkot Sector. Battery commanders were Major Muhammad Iqbal, Major M.H.K.Durrani and Major Tajjamal Hussain. Major Sakhi Muhammad was the second in command and Captain Mushtaq Ahmed was the adjutant of the regiment during the war. Being a Corps LAA, it was equipped with thirty-two. 50 Quad Gun and seven 40mm Bofors Mark 1 Guns along with one AN/TPS-ID Radar.

**36 LAA** Regiment was under command Lieutenant Colonel M.S.K.Durrani who was in command since December 1959. Regiment had 132, 133, 134 and 135 LAA Batteries. It was initially deployed to protect the bridges. No 132 LAA Battery was deployed at Ravi Bridge, 132 LAA Battery was initially deployed at Kala and later moved to Sargodha Air Base. 134 LAA Battery was at Chenab Bridge, it later move to Ravi Syphon; 135 LAA Battery was at Jhelum Bridge, it also move to Khem Kharn during the war. 36 LAA was also a Corps LAA regiment and had 32 (50 Quad) and 8 (40mm Bofors) guns along with one radar.

Corps LAA Regiments were mobile and had sufficient transport for rapid movement, less these two regiments (29 and 36) all other AA Regiments were semi-mobile, and they had transport enough to move only one battery at a time.

### **LAA Defence of Air Bases**

The air war in September War had two distinct phases which operated simultaneously. Air Bases were a natural target and they remained so during the seventeen days of conflict, simultaneously in the field, ground formations were subjected to air attacks by IAF. This was the first major war after the WWII in which anti-aircraft played an active and decisive role and as such is a matter of great interest to historians. PAF was technically and technologically far

superior to the IAF, it had F-104 Starfighter the only supersonic fighter in the subcontinent. PAF apart from a squadron of Starfighters had over ninety Sabres F-86 and a squadron of B-57 Bombers along with C-130 transporters. India on the other hand had British and French aircraft including Mystere, Vampire, Gnat, Hunter fighters and Canberra bombers. There were few MIG-21s as well.

PAF had its headquarters at Peshawar in north, Risalpur was another major airfield in close vicinity of air headquarters, mainly operated by PAF Academy. Sargodha in the Central Punjab was and still is the heart of PAF; it was the most important airfield as bulk of PAF strike fighters were stationed here. At Sakesar, 100 nautical miles west of Sargodha amidst the medium hills of Soan –Sakesar was the surveillance radar of PAF. In south the Mauripur is the major airfield located few miles south west of Karachi. PAF had two major surveillance radars in the south, most important being at Badin, a semi desert area located 150 nautical miles east of Karachi. PAF had the overall responsibility of defending the air space of Pakistan, the air strategy revolved around attaining air supremacy in the initial stage and support to field formations depends upon the outcome of air battle. PAF also had 20mm cannons manned by their own troops which were integrated with the LAA Batteries at the air bases. Early warning and identification of friend and foe are two basic bricks of anti-aircraft defence from its inception and this war was no exception. PAF and Pakistan Army (3 AA Brigade) had established a joint operation centre at Karachi and at 1 Corps an air liaison officer from PAF was present. In the field a ground liaison officer was responsible for indicating targets to own air force. Request for an air sortie in support of own troops had to be routed through the brigade and divisional headquarters. Thus anti-aircraft regiments and batteries have to be kept informed regarding any air movement to avoid friendly fire on own aircraft. Both LAA Regiments supporting field formation had their own integral local



warning radars with a range of 20 nautical miles. However the air warning sentry (mobile observer) still remained the most reliable source during day light hours. Everything in the ends comes down to the gun crew, it is they who in split of seconds have to detect and open fire on the air intruder and keep on firing; never letting him go undetected. The long deployment in the field and at air bases since the beginning of the year paid its dividends as troops although mostly uneducated yet they now fully differentiate between own and enemy aircraft.

Pakistan Army's anti-aircraft defence was fully prepared, well trained and highly motivated on the eve of the war and so was the Pakistan Air Force.

**6 September 1965.** At 0530 hours, India crossed the international border and at 1200 hours, President of Pakistan Field Marshal Ayub Khan addressed the nation and war was declared.<sup>78</sup> Surprisingly there were no air raids on any of the PAF base on the very first day of the war, rather PAF struck first in the evening (1730 hours) attacking Adampur, Pathankot and Halwara air bases. F-86 Sabres practically destroyed entire fleet of newly inducted Russian MIG-21s of IAF on ground.<sup>79</sup> IAF came into action after a lapse of twenty four hours. *The entire day we manned the guns and there was a thrill in the air, everyone looking at the sky and listening for feint noise of any aircraft. It was our first war and we had no idea how it will start. As an Ack Ack gunner, war is different for us from other gunners; we fire directly as a man-to-man on an enemy aircraft.*<sup>80</sup>

On ground, the main focus was on Lahore Sector where advancing Indian were mauled by the attacking Sabres of PAF. One major move was the shifting of 133 LAA Battery ex 36 LAA Regiment

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78 War Diary 6 LAA.

79 PAF Museum at Karachi . 1965 Air War through paintings.

80 13 LAA Digest of Service.

which was deployed at Central Ordnance Depot at Kala was ordered at 0400 hours 7th September to move immediately to Sargodha. The convoy left Kala at 0600 hours, time was consumed in getting the vehicles for the move and drove through Mandi Bahauddin and reached Sargodha at 1300 hours and within an hour occupied their gun platforms just in time to be ready to receive the air raid.<sup>81</sup> This battery was also placed under command 20 LAA Regiment, thus on the evening of 7 September 1965 there were 72 anti-aircraft guns (40 mm Bofors) 15 (20 mm triple barrel cannon) and 8 (.50 quards) protecting the air field.<sup>82</sup>

**7 September 1965.** First air raid of the war came over at Rawalpindi at 0130 hours, target was apparently General Headquarters (GHQ) and Chaklala air field. 'Two enemy Canberra came over Rawalpindi at 0130 and dropped eight bombs of thousand pounds each',<sup>83</sup> Two 40 mm guns of 112 LAA Battery (29 LAA Regiment) which was specifically deployed for the anti-aircraft defence of GHQ opened fire. However, as the bombers were at medium altitude thus out of range of 40mm Bofors. It was at this stage, it became obvious that discarding heavy ack ack guns (3.7 inch) was not a good step. This was the first and only air raid over Rawalpindi.

At **0430 hours**, Badin radar picked up signatures of incoming Indian aircraft and it passed the plot of six aircraft at a distance of eighty nautical miles, at ten thousand feet, south-east of Mauripur. At 0450 hours, local radar of 6 LAA picked up the intruders, At 0455 hours IAF aircraft reached Mauripur, two of them entered the area and projected light at Air Traffic Building, instantly guns opened fire and initially fired Barrage, later guns continued firing by observation in the moon lit light till 0459 hours. Aircraft had pulled away hastily and no damage was caused to the air field.<sup>84</sup>

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81 War Diary 36 LAA Regiment. and War Diary 20 LAA Regiment

82 War Diary 20 LAA Regiment

83 War Diary 29 LAA Regiment

84 War Diary 6 LAA Regiment.

At **Sargodha** Base, first raid also came at about 0515 hours, six Mysteres initially recognized as friendly (since they had their landing gears lowered) raided the base. However, when these aircraft approached closer to the air field they were recognized and guns started firing. The gunners of this battery (14 LAA) in coordination with 20 LAA Regiment shot down one aircraft.<sup>85</sup> Pakistan Air Force interceptors shot down remaining four aircraft before they could escape. *This was a memorable day in the history of this regiment (20 LAA) as expected first raid came...in this very first encounter with enemy raiders the Regiment shot down one Mystere and damage was caused to the other aircraft.*<sup>86</sup> As the air attack subsided the troops although still manning the guns in high state, had a little breather, for all of them this was the first ever taste of an air raid. The layout of deployment was such that two batteries were deployed at each end of runways and two other batteries were deployed at the mid of runway. Ammunition was placed close to the guns and as such the guns were being replenished when second wave of raiders appeared at 0610 hours, comprising of six aircraft. These aircraft made low pass and without causing or suffering any loss or damage they disappeared. At 0910 hours, the third wave of attackers came, 20 LAA Regiment and 14 LAA Battery responded with fire and one aircraft was claimed as hit, however own F-86 Sabre at tarmac was hit by an enemy strafing and it was destroyed on ground.

In the evening at 1545 hours, the fourth raid of IAF appeared, it caught the guns by surprise *'this raid came in un-announced both by SOC and own radar; LAA observer of this regiment however gave early warning and the guns effectively engaged the targets which dropped their load of 500 Lbs ineffectively. One of the enemy aircraft was hit by LAA fire and it crashed 4-5 miles south-east of the air field near Chak 96 GB'*.<sup>87</sup> Fifth and last air raid at Sargodha Air Base came at 2100 hours, and passed off harmlessly.<sup>88</sup>

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85 War Diary 13 LAA Regiment. 1965 War.

86 War Diary 20 LAA Regiment

87 War Diary 20 LAA

88 War Diary 20 LAA

Mauripur Air Base was also raided at about 2300 hours, two IAF aircraft attacked the air field; one was shot by gunners of 6 LAA Regiment.<sup>89</sup> No serious damage was caused to the Mauripur Base throughout the war. A total of nine Indian aircraft were shot down by own air force including two claimed by LAA fire on 7 September 1965 at Sargodha<sup>90</sup>, it is now celebrated as PAF Day. No bridge on Rivers Jhelum , Chenab and Ravi were attacked, neither Radar stations of PAF at Badin and Sakesar were intruded; it seems as if IAF had chickened out.<sup>91</sup>

## **Dacca**

The first and the last air attack on Dacca came in the morning of 7 September 1965, IAF strafed PAF radar station at Kurmitola, couple of miles away from Tejgaon air field. The radar station itself was without any Ack Ack protection. After the air raid, PAF asked for AA guns, ‘the radar station required eighteen guns of 40 mm, or a battery to protect it’. Captain Afzal Khan demanded extra guns from Dacca Ordnance depot; they had only one 40 mm Bofors which they issued to the battery. Captain Afzal pulled one more gun from his defences and thus placed two guns at the Kurmitola. ‘By evening two guns were provided for the defence of PAF radar’.<sup>92</sup>

On **8 September**, Mauripur and Sargodha were put on high alert with guns being free and waiting for the visual detection of IAF. At 0154 hours, enemy aircraft intruded in our air space (Mauripur), but it returned without attacking . On the same day Mauripur was attacked at 2100 hours. Two enemy aircraft approaching Mauripur were picked up by own LAA radar, at 2105 hours aircraft entered the area and guns fired Umbrella Barrage,

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89 War Diary 6 LAA

90 13 LAA letter no SC/A/4/29 dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 1966.

91 War Diary 20 LAA Regiment

92 War Diary 24 LAA Battery

no damage was done to the air base.<sup>93</sup> Mauripur Air Base from 9 September till the ceasefire on 23 September 1965 had few alerts but no air raid came on the air field. Sargodha also had alarms of intruding Indian aircraft on 8 September but they never reached the air base.

## Night Bombing Campaign

Indian Air Force after the colossal losses it suffered on 7 September did not resort to day attacks rather it opted to attack the air bases in the hours of darkness. IAF had penetrated the own airspace on 8 and 9 September at Sargodha but failed to drop any payload. First night attack came on 9/10 September 1965. At 0100 hours, the first wave of bombers came , ‘ *it caused no damage, three of his bombs fell in the wagon line of 20 LAA and 14 AA Workshop area... three of his bombs fell very close to the dispersal area of F-104.*’<sup>94</sup> The attack on 10/11 September came at 0130 hours, guns opened up with Barrage Fire, as there were no means to ascertain the exact position or direction of intruding aircraft other than the hearing senses of the battery commanders. Both these night raids had been able to reach the air base undetected. All air raids came from south and south-east direction; that is from Kirana Hills direction. It was therefore concluded that enemy is using the Hill as an aid to his approach, two observers were therefore posted on both ends of the feature at night to give timely warning and they proved very effective.<sup>95</sup>

On **11/12 September** there was no night attack however on 12/13 September the attack came, IAF had changed its tactics, instead of single attack, the night witnessed wave after wave of attacking intruders all in all four waves of IAF came, each having two-four aircraft with a time gap of fifteen minutes. Gunner Akhtar Badshah<sup>96</sup>

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93 War Diary 6 LAA Regiment.

94 War Diary 20 LAA Regiment.

95 War Diary 20 LAA Regiment.

96 He was decorated with Tamgha –e-Jurat. War Diaries of 20 LAA and 36 LAA regiments.

of 133 LAA Battery was the firer on Gun No C-3 and in the second wave of the air attack, he was hit with a splinter of the fallen bomb and he received multiple splinters while still being in his firer seat. He was taken to the PAF hospital where he embraced martyrdom and was buried with military honour in the PAF graveyard. Brigadier Abdul Salam, Commander 3 AA Brigade who was on an operational tour was also present during the funeral.

On night **13/14** September two waves of IAF attacked Sargodha without causing any significant damage. Same night Peshawar air field was attacked for the first time by IAF. At 0100 hours, 13 LAA command post established at the Peshawar air field received early warning from Ground Control Interceptor regarding impending air attack (six in numbers) flying from south east. At 0130 hours, enemy aircraft threw flares in order to lit the air field, guns opened fire and no damage was caused, enemy dropped its fuel tank as well which fell close to own gun position.<sup>97</sup> Night raids on Sargodha were now sporadic in nature, enemy bombers came on the night of 15/16 September, 16/17 September and last raid came on the night of 20/21 September 1965, ‘no damage was done either to the PAF installations or the LAA defences’.<sup>98</sup>

Peshawar Air Field was subject of another air attack at 0250 hours on **16 September**; early warning was given by PAF at 0230 hours thus guns were well prepared and anxiously waited for the aircraft. Enemy dropped Green flares on the air field, only a portion of old ATC building and officers block was damaged, bombs had fallen on the north circular road and it was the shock waves which caused damage.<sup>99</sup> In another incident, own F-104 had sustained damage and crashed during landing, Naib Subedar Muhammad Aslam and Gunner Khan Afsar who were manning the 40 mm Bofor, rushed

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97 War Diary 13 LAA Regiment

98 War Diary 20 LAA Regiment.

99 War Diary 13 LAA Regiment

towards the burning Starfighter and with utter disregard to their own safety they helped the unconscious pilot and brought him to the safe distance. Both gunners were decorated with Tamgha-e-Basalat.<sup>100</sup>

### **Last Days of Air War - Sargodha**

By evening **20 September** 1965 it became obvious that IAF had lost the will to attack own air bases any more, thus 14 LAA Battery (ex 13 LAA) was pulled out from Sargodha on 21 September evening. A new anti-aircraft battery Sargodha Light Anti-Aircraft Battery (Mujahids) was raised on 21 September 1965. Major Anwar Noon was its first battery commander and it had thirty 20 mm cannons. Major (retired) Sakhi Muhammad a reservist was entrusted with training and on 28 September 1965, this LAA Battery fired its first rounds during training.

### **Light Anti-Aircraft in support of Field Formations**

Pakistan's military had anticipated the Indian riposte with the ever advancing success of Grand Slam in the Indian Occupied Kashmir. Army and air force were on high alert since the rolling of the Operation Grand Slam; the only intangible was when India will lose its nerves. The operational strategy revolved around a knockout blow through own 1 Armoured Division 'Mailed Fist'. It was kept in rear at Chiniot in August 1965, at the onset of Operation Gibraltar and later moved across east of River Ravi before September. 19 (SP) LAA regiment was an integral part of Mailed Fist and provided ack ack cover. Indian opening move was to make dash for the Lahore with infantry and armoured, yet it did not committed its sole armoured division in this manoeuvre.

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100 War Diary 13 LAA Regiment.

## Lahore-Kasur-Khem Karan. 6-12 September 1965

The 1965 War had three phases, in the first phase India launched attack at early morning of 6 September with an aim to capture Lahore, it was blunted by own 10 and 11 Infantry Divisions. Pakistan Army had the grand strategy of attacking the India with its 1 Armoured Division making a bold thrust towards Amritsar. Thus in this war the role of armoured formation was lynchpin and extreme caution was exercised and displayed through camouflage and frequent movement thereby keeping the Indians in suspense and horror. On the eve of the Indian attack, Mailed Fist was deployed in Halla-Balloki-Bhai Pheru area. 19 (SP) LAA's Batteries were deployed at ammunition depot Halla, divisional administrative area (DAA) at Bhai Pheru and one battery was protecting the Balloki Headworks.

On the evening of 6 September, Mailed Fist move forward to its forming up place, resultantly one LAA Battery of 19 (SP) LAA also moved by road to protect the bridgehead over Rohi Nullah between Kasur and Khem Karan,<sup>101</sup> another battery also move by road to protect bridge over BRB Canal. On the night of 6/7 September 1965, armoured division (DAA) move to new location supported by two (SP)LAA Batteries. *'Kasur diversion, BRB bridge and Rohi Nullah bridge obstacles were creating traffic jams and the enemy air was very active.'*<sup>102</sup> There were over 400 civilian trucks parked haphazardly in the DAA, these trucks had arrived on the evening of 6 September. On the very next night 7/8 September, a complete traffic chaos erupted due to these vehicles at Bhai Pheru and it took five hours to clear the jam; however LAA was not put to test by the enemy. On the same very night as soon as the LAA (SP) Batteries reached their destination they received orders to move forward and reinforced the LAA defences at the forward edge ahead of Kasur. These two batteries without any pause set forward, their

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101 War Diary 19 (SP) LAA Regiment.

102 War Diary 19 (SP) LAA.



A vehicles left by train via Manga Mandi-Raiwind-Kasur, the B Vehicles convoy of these two SP LAA batteries move by road, it was subject to air raid near Kasur'.<sup>103</sup> As the special military train halted at Athilpur a small railway station next to Kasur, the IAF attacked and strafed the train, own LAA(SP) guns retaliated fire while in the process of derailing, few guns had been off loaded from the train while majority of guns were still on rails. After the air-raid both batteries rushed, one occupied the bridge on Rohi Nullah meant for B Vehicles and other battery deployed around Kasur diversion. 'The AA defence was now thick and effective and the enemy aircraft, received heavy punishment.'<sup>104</sup>

On the night of 8/9 September 1965, own armoured division was unleashed and enemy soon realised the gravity of this manoeuvre and threw everything in the arena including inundation of the area. IAF was carrying out an average of fifteen sorties daily yet failed to reach any worthwhile objective. In the process impetus of own armoured division was now lost and battle became an act of attrition. Pakistan Army had managed to ingress ten miles inside Indian Territory and captured Khem Karan Railway Station. By night 10/11 September, IAF sorties dropped down to an average of 3-4 per day. Own LAA (SP) Battery deployed at Kasur Diversion was moving forward to supplement the Anti-Aircraft defence to 21 Medium Artillery regiment deployed close to Khem Karan railway station.

The war entered into its third and decisive phase when India launched its armoured division in Ravi-Chenab corridor. Battle was already taking place in and around Sialkot since 6 September but now Chawinda town thirty odd miles east of Sialkot became the focus of the world; fate of a nation hinged on its defence.

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103 War Diary 19 (SP) LAA.

104 War Diary 19 (SP) LAA

## **Rachna Corridor**

The major and decisive battle of 1965 War was fought in the green fields of Northern Punjab or Rachna Corridor; the area between the Rivers Ravi – Chenab. Both rivers originate from Himalayas north of Sialkot in high mountains of Kashmir and entered into Pakistan forming a narrow funnel which extends as river flows down. Thus the triangle formed by Wazirabad (Chenab) in west- Lahore (Ravi) on east and Sialkot in north with Gujranwala as the major city was the objective of Indian armoured division supported by no less than three infantry divisions. Indian aim was to advance southward with the flow of terrain, capture Gujranwala and cut off the main artery of Pakistan; the Grand Trunk Road and railway line running parallel to it.

Own 1 Corps was deployed in the area along with Artillery 4 Corps. LAA defences revolved around 29 LAA and 36 LAA Regiments. Whereas 36 LAA was deployed for the protection of bridges and ordnance depots, 29 LAA was in the field moving with the artillery regiments. Between 6-12 September 1965, one battery of 36 LAA (133 LAA Battery) was moved from Kala to Sargodha air base on 6 September and on 12 September another battery (135 LAA) was shifted from bridge on River Jhelum to Khem Karan. 134 LAA Battery (ex 36 LAA) which was deployed for air defence protection of bridge on River Chenab was taken out on 13 September and deployed at Ravi Syphon. Only 132 LAA Battery (36 LAA regiment) remained deployed throughout the war for anti-aircraft protection of bridge on River Ravi; two troops from this battery were pulled out on 19 September to protect the Syphon at Burki. The strategic bridges on the rivers (Jhelum, Chenab and Ravi) were seldom attacked by the IAF; it was only on 20 September 1965 when two Hunters attacked Ravi Bridge. ‘Aircraft flew at low level and one aircraft was shot down, forcing the other to run away’.

On 6 September 1965 when India crossed the international border the Anti-Aircraft regiments of Pakistan Army were already deployed, however there was no anti-aircraft defence available to the two own infantry divisions which took the initial brunt of enemy assault in early morning. Surprisingly Indian Air Force did not provide any close support to their infantry and armour. The very first raid of enemy airforce came at early morning at Dhaunkal railway station near Wazirabad railway junction. Miss Toosi who was a college student received fatal splinters due to Indian aircraft strafing on a parked train and became the first civilian casualty of the war due to enemy air strafing.<sup>105</sup>

Own 29 LAA Regiment till the early hours of the 6 September 1965 was deployed in support of 7 Infantry Division at Khaur across Munawar Tawi, along with 110 LAA Battery. At midday, 29 LAA tactical headquarters and 111 LAA Battery which was providing LAA cover to the own artillery regiments was ordered to move to Sialkot and be undercommand 4 Corps Artillery; by evening 29 LAA was in position. The day was thrilling for the ack ack gunners as IAF attacked the very gun position which were being defended at Khaur. *‘4-6 enemy aircraft attacked own gun position defended by 110 LAA Battery, four times during the day and were engaged, one enemy aircraft was shot down.’*<sup>106</sup>

19 (SP) LAA less one battery,<sup>107</sup> was also moved from Kasur to Gujranwala on 12/13th September, its B Vehicles(administrative) moved by road and A Vehicles (tracked) were transported by train. On arrival at Ghakkar (town near Gujranwala) the regiment provided Anti-Aircraft defence to the armoured division administrative area (DAA).

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105 Pakistan Railway History plaque at Wazirabad railway junction, a mosque has been built in the memory of martyrs . Two railway labourers were also killed in that air raid.

106 War Diary 29 LAA Regiment.

107 19 (SP) LAA War Diary, the battery was left at Khem Karan to support 5 Armoured Brigade.

## 13-22 September 1965

The final act of 1965 War was fought in the plains of Chawinda, India unleashed its armoured division in a bid to capture Sialkot and reach Grand Trunk Road. Own armoured division moved from Gujranwala to Nandipur with 19 (SP) LAA providing protection. On the same night (13/14) the 19(SP) LAA was ordered to move further up and reach Pasrur via Daska. *‘Traffic control and the spacing being good, the distance was covered in three hours’*. The road from Nandipur to Daska is single track with high trees on both sides. Despite the war, people thronged on the road and offered everything they had to the troops. After reaching Pasrur, the 19 (SP) LAA was deployed on the south and east of the town. *‘Only a few raids materialised which were driven off conveniently, by this time it was known that enemy is going only for gun areas’*. There was a serious consideration in firing the anti-aircraft guns as own aircraft were also in air. It is worth highlighting that the Indian move was detected accidentally by own Army Aviation aircraft on a reconnaissance mission by Captain Hidayat Ullah Niazi (later major general and SJ).<sup>108</sup> Own field artillery guns and regiments 1 (SP) Field Regiment, 31 Field Regiment and 8 Medium Regiment undercommand 4 Corps Artillery were deployed in between Pasrur and Chawinda whereas 15 (SP) and 16 (SP) Regiments were deployed west of Badiana.

On the morning of 15 September, 19 (SP) LAA was instructed to be prepared to support the 12 Cavalry in ground attack role, they were to protect the approaches to Pasrur. Battle was fluid, the batteries of 19 (SP) LAA were moved rapidly and at times dispersed, and one battery was tasked to protect the bridges on the canal whereas two batteries were protecting the field regiments (15 and 16 SPs). On 19 September, two enemy aircraft attacked the guns positions of heavy

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<sup>108</sup> Azam, Cheema, Madni *An Illustrated History of Pakistan army Aviation 1947-2007*. Islamabad, Army Press , 2007.

regiment, this attack lasted for over three minutes, during which one enemy aircraft was shot down by 111 LAA Battery (29 LAA).<sup>109</sup>

Enemy aircraft attacked own positions and were deterred by the anti-aircraft fire. In the absence of a clear fire control orders, the Ack Ack gunners had to be extra cautious in opening fire on the aircraft lest they hit own aircraft. As 19 (SP) LAA was dispersed thus, hostile acts of enemy aircraft gave ample warning time to open fire.

On 21 September at 1000 hours, a formation of Indian Mysteres appeared and attacked the gun positions of own field artillery; it was one of the heaviest air attack, two formations attacked. The duel between the Ack Ack and the pilots started, the AA guns kept on firing at the diving aircraft and similarly the enemy pilot also aimed at knocking off the guns. Tactically, own AA fire is always directed at the incoming aircraft rather than the receding aircraft.

*Presence of two LAA Batteries on the battle field began to be felt by the enemy very soon, A Canberra and over half a dozen aircraft were hit between 16 -23 September, enemy began to give wide berth to AA defended areas...Regiment got away lightly considering the pounding, apart from air attacks, from the enemy field and medium artillery. Three men were killed and four wounded, two tanks were damaged, one of them slightly.*<sup>110</sup>

### **111 LAA Battery and Chawinda**

During the 1965 War, this LAA Battery commanded by Major Rao Tajjamul Hussain Khan, with Naib Subedar Akbar Khan as the troop leader. Battery remained deployed in Sialkot Sector. On the morning of 6 September, it moved from Bhimber to Sialkot

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<sup>109</sup> 29 LAA War Diary.

<sup>110</sup> 19 (SP) LAA War Diary.

and remained undercommand 4 Corps Artillery. It was given the task to provide anti-aircraft protection to 33 Heavy and 34 Heavy Regiments. On 8 September, while being deployed at Milestone 11 on Sialkot-Daska road, it shot down one enemy aircraft.<sup>111</sup> On 9th September, the Battery moved to Badiana to protect the two heavy regiments. On 11 September at 0630 hours, Indian aircraft attacked 34 Heavy Regiment, own 111 LAA Battery opened fire and one aircraft was shot down. At 0900 hours, four Indian aircraft again attacked the same position, two aircraft were shot down<sup>112</sup> by this battery and one pilot was found dead near Chawinda.

On the morning of 12 September at 0630 hours, a formation of four IAF jets attacked 33 Heavy Regiment, three soldiers of 111 Battery were injured however the Battery shot down two Indian jets.<sup>113</sup> Next day (13 September ) the gun positions were again attacked by Indian aircraft at 0630 hours, two aircraft were shot down<sup>114</sup> and one was damaged. Mystere No.1051 and Mystere No 1061, pilot of former was killed. On 14 September, enemy airforce was active whole day in the area of 111 LAA Battery, at 0700 hours, one aircraft was hit<sup>115</sup> which was seen falling in area Maduphur. On 16 September, the Battery moved to area between Pasrur and Daska. On 19, Battery again came under air attack and this was repeated on 20 and 21 September as well.

111 LAA Battery (29 LAA) was awarded with two Sitara-e-Jurats namely Major Rao Tajjamal and Naib Subedar Muhammad Khan Akbar, whereas two more were decorated with Tamgha-e-Jurats, namely Havildar Siraj Ul Islam and Havildar Akbar Din.

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111 War Diary of 29 LAA PP 107-110.

112 War Diary of 29 LAA PP 107-110.

113 War Diary of 29 LAA PP 107-110.

114 War Diary of 29 LAA PP 107-110.

115 War Diary of 29 LAA PP 107-110.

### **134 LAA Battery (36 LAA)**

In the September 1965 War, another LAA Battery which rose to distinction was 134 LAA Battery, commanded by Major Saidal Khan with Subedar Muhammad Din as the battery's senior junior commissioned officer (SJCO). 134 LAA Battery remained deployed at Chenab Bridge from 6 -13 September, however as there were no air raids on the bridge, the battery was moved to defend the syphon on River Ravi at Bambanwala Ravi Bedian (BRB). Two IAFs jets were shot down on 15 September, as the syphon came under heavy enemy air attack. On 19/20 September, four guns were detached from the battery undercommand Subedar Muhammad Din to protect a bailey bridge. It came under air attack and heavy shelling from enemy artillery guns; one Indian jet was shot down on 22 September 1965. Major Saidal Khan and Subedar Muhammad Din were both decorated with Sitara-e-Jurats

An interesting and morale boosting incident sums up the civilian morale during the war. At Nanowali a small village few miles west of Badiana where a battery of 19 (SP) LAA was deployed. 'Battle was at its height and the field regiments were blazing away day and night, air attacks were numerous and the LAA guns were giving maximum display of fire power, in all this raucous, an old lady was heard chastising a barber for having timidly left the village a few days back'.<sup>116</sup>

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116 War Diary of 36 LAA.

## *Chapter Four*

### **Anti-Aircraft In between the Wars**

The strategic error of relying upon LAA exclusively for Anti-Aircraft defences was rectified by raising 41 HAA Regiment on 29 September 1965. One of the key lessons of the 1965 War was in the fact that defence of air bases is vital and limitation of 40 mm Bofors was obvious in terms of range, thus allowing Indians to attack the Mauripur and Sargodha air bases during night on few occasions. HAA was meant from its inception for the defence of static installations and more specifically for night intruders whereas LAA (40mm Bofors) was to defend against the low altitude aircraft attacking air bases and in the field.

5 LAA and 6 LAA Regiments remained deployed for another year at Badin and Mauripur respectively, so were 13 LAA at Peshawar. The Corps LAA regiments 29 LAA and 36 LAA also remained deployed at bridges, syphons and protecting own deployed artillery. War itself brought forward the naked truth that despite having a strong air force, an enemy aircraft will pass through the defending air force and in the end it is a duel between the fighter pilot and the anti-aircraft gunner. At air bases, own AA regiments deterred the IAF from making an accurate hit on own aircraft parked in pens. Anti-Aircraft is no surety that an enemy aircraft will be shot down, the statistics of both Great Wars testify this hypothesis, however it does reduce the effectiveness of an attacking aircraft and in this regard own LAA rose to the occasion during the 1965 War.

**41 HAA** Regiment was raised on 17 September 1965, undercommand Lieutenant Colonel M.D. Qureishi; but it received its guns and radars in October 1965. RHQ and P Battery (154) were deployed at Malir whereas 155 Battery (Q Battery) was



deployed at Sargodha and R Battery (156) was at Peshawar. **43 LAA** Regiment was raised at Risalpur on 27 September 1965, when Naib Subedar Fazal Hussain arrived with the first batch of 42 gunners at Risalpur, formal raising was authorised on 29 September and the first commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Nazir Ahmed took over the command on 3 October 1965. The 43 LAA Regiment was originally planned to be raised at Newshehra however the very first military aid from China in the shape of single barrel 37mm Guns and 14.5mm Quad were air transported and aircraft landed at Risalpur thus regiment was raised there.

At Newshehra on 30 September 1965, an independent LAA Battery (163) was also raised, on 6 January 1966; this battery was given the status of **58 LAA** Regiment and moved to Risalewala air field. Lieutenant Colonel Shams Ul Alam took over the command on 25 February 1966. Later in December 1966, two more batteries (213 and 214) were raised. The last of the heavy anti-aircraft regiment raised was **52 HAA** Regiment, to enhance the heavy anti-aircraft defences of PAF bases; it was raised at Malir Cantonment on 26 November 1965 by Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Rehman.

Raisings of these two LAA and two HAA regiments were the immediate steps taken by the army to bolster own anti-aircraft defences, these regiments were all exclusively for the PAF bases and these regiments remained deployed at bases till mid of 1967. Risalewala was the new addition to the air fields to be protected. Manpower for new raising comprised of recruits mostly untrained, reservists and a nucleus of trained gunners from other Anti-Aircraft regiments. In September 1966 deactivation was initiated and all reservists were discharged. This by itself created an acute shortage of trained manpower '*in certain cases training was conducted in the regiment for the recruits as artillery centre was unable to cope up with the requirement. A stage came when all Gun No 1 were unpaid lance naiks (U/LNk)*'.<sup>117</sup>

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117 Digest of Service 58 LAA Regiment.

In February 1966, Brigadier Ameer Ahmed took over the command of 3 AA Brigade from Brigadier Salam. A significant step was the re-designation of this brigade as 3 Independent Anti-Aircraft Brigade Group on 14 June 1966.<sup>118</sup> Being an independent brigade allows greater freedom of action in deploying guns, a prerequisite which was felt during the just concluded war with India.

Lieutenant General Khateer Hassan (retired) recalls ‘I was posted to 41 HAA at Sargodha in 1967 shortly after the war. My regiment was deployed at the Sultan Textile Mill close to Sargodha air base, apart from my regiment, 5 LAA was also part of the base Anti-Aircraft defences; it was deployed at present day Remount Depot. Sargodha did not had a cantonment then, a house in Satellite Town known as Dr Nasrullah bungalow was our mess shared by both regiments. We had 3.7 inch Mark B guns along with radars. There were 24 guns in the regiment. Each battery had two troops of four guns each. One battery of my regiment was deployed at Peshawar. The regiment was five miles away from mess and less commanding officer we all pedalled to the RHQ. Day was spent on the guns and evening on the sports ground. Hockey and basketball along with volleyball were the standard games played with troops. After a year and half we moved to Karachi, it was an interchange with 52 HAA. We handed over our guns at Sargodha to them and took over theirs at Malir. There was a difference between these two types of HAA guns, they had Mark 2. The major difference was, that whereas Mark 2 was meant for static defence and as such had different gun carriage, we on the other hand had mobile version known as Mark 3. Thus we had to train our troops extensively and rigorously for conversion.’

### **Induction of 37 mm and 14.5 mm Ack Ack Guns**

In July 1967, above mentioned guns and cannons were formally inducted in Anti-Aircraft Artillery, they partially replaced 40mm

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<sup>118</sup> Digest of Service 3 AA Brigade.

single barrel Bofors anti-aircraft guns which remained as mainstay of Ack Ack not only in subcontinent but all across the globe since 1939. The 37 mm single and 14.5 quadruple were Chinese origin, 37mm had two version, it came as single barrel as well as double barrel. 14.5 mm Quad replaced 20 mm twin barrel as the rapid fire anti-aircraft cannon.

**Tactical Doctrine.** The School of Anti-Aircraft Artillery concluded after research and trials in field that the old system of siting guns in two rings was outdated and did not meet even the minimum deterrence expected of LAA weapons against low flying and faster aircraft. It was mathematically proved that a minimum of 900 rounds per minute are needed to have a chance of hitting a modern jet aircraft flying at a speed of 350 knots. A combination of 37 mm and 14.5 mm quad Ack Ack guns co-located in pairs meet this requirement adequately. It was therefore, decided that only one ring of guns in pairs be sited near the line of weapon release with one pair sited on the VP itself to give depth to the defence. To reduce warning time better communications between the OPs, Command Posts and guns was also strongly recommended. It was also decided that every LAA Regiment should have four instead of three batteries. The firepower of an anti-aircraft regiment suddenly increased manifolds with better chances of shooting hostile aircraft. On the other hand it also increases the number of gunners on each gun from five men to seven men; this training and shortage of gunners was the Achilles Heel.

**Raising of 67 (SP) LAA.** Sattath as 67 (SP) LAA is popularly known was raised at Jamrud Fort as part of 6 Armoured Division Artillery located at Kharian. Sattath raising order was issued on 21 June 1967 but formal orders were issued on 12 August 1967. Initially only headquarters were raised and all its batteries came from other regiments. 48 (SP) LAA Battery was the only battery which had war

experience on the tracks, it came from 19 (SP) LAA Regiment, this battery was raised in 1952. The other two batteries namely 112 LAA Battery was detached from 29 LAA Regiment and 133 LAA Battery was an integral part of 36 LAA but now it became part of Sattath.

**75 LAA Regiment** was raised on 17 April 1969 at Malir with Lieutenant Colonel Aslam Khan as the first commanding officer; regiment was equipped with 40mm Bofors. It was raised as a ‘training team’ for Jordan. After the 1967 Arab-Israel War in which the Arab air forces were almost annihilated on ground by the day attack of Israeli Air Force. Jordan was worst hit as its sole early warning radar system was destroyed, thus King Hussain requested Pakistan for support. Major General Nawazish Ali, head of Pakistan military mission in Jordan and Nawab Chattari the ambassador at Amman supported this request thus it was decided to raise a training team<sup>119</sup> to help Jordan. *‘Major Altaf (brigadier retd) was the first officer to report in the unit. Unit was issued with 48 x 40 millimetre Anti Aircraft Guns. Captain Abdul Hassan, Quarter Master collected major equipment from Central Ordnance Depot Rawalpindi from 3-18 November 1969’.*<sup>120</sup>

On 16 November 1969, advance party led by Major Sunawar left Karachi on a PAF C-130 aircraft and arrived at Amman. As the troops were unloading the equipment, the Jordanian officials who were present inquired about the large quantity of white cloth. ‘We have brought our coffin cloth with us; we have come with a resolve to fight till the end if situation arises’ was the reply.<sup>121</sup> Main body sailed from Karachi undercommand Lieutenant Colonel Iqbal Sarfraz along with Major Basit (second in command) Major

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119 Ministry of Defence Letter number. 6217/598/SD-13/3267/D-13 dated 31 October 1969.

120 75 LAA Digest of Service.

121 Event was narrated by Brigadier Farid (retd) who was military attaché in Jordan in 2013 and was informed about this incident by Brigadier Hashem(retd) of Jordan Army who was present on that day at airport.

Altaf and Major A.Qureishi along with Major Sunawar were the three battery commanders. Captain Habib (adjutant) Captain Abdul Hasan (quarter master) , Captains Aslam, Akhtar Nazir, Muhammad Saleem, Khizar Mehmood, Razak Hussain, Muzzafar Khan, Bashir Ahmed, Abdul Mastan and Majid Rehman were the other officers, there were no subalterns in the regiment. Main body arrived at Basra in Iraq and then travelled by road to Amman (Mofruk or H-5 air field). It was a morale boosting road journey, Pakistan was the only country which had contributed with troops as a show of solidarity with Arabs and it was appreciated by common Arab. Our regiment was affectionately known as Katiba Mujahid (regiment of mujahids) among the Jordan military circles. Jordan anti-aircraft regiments were also equipped with 40mm Bofors, they were attached with our training regiment for duration of three months.<sup>122</sup>

Katiba Mujahid became a living example of Muslim brotherhood, a military ambassador of Pakistan. On 14 December 1969, King Hussein of Jordan accompanied by senior army commanders formally welcomed the regiment and met with officers. President Buland Ajwat of Turkey also visited the Katiba Mujahid on 17 December 1969. Air Marshal Rahim Khan of PAF also inspected the Katiba Mujahid in January 1970. Another notable dignitary was Colonel Qaddafi of Libya who visited the Katiba Mujahid on 3 June 1970.

The glaring difference between the own and Jordanian anti-aircraft regimens was in term of working environment. Jordanians were quite impressed and learnt a lot from us in terms of working environment which demands a high degree of self-discipline and physical fitness. In the morning PT was religiously observed by own troops followed by gun drills, games in the evening and then night gun drills as well. 11 Anti-Aircraft Regiment of Royal Jordan Army was the first of the regiments to undergo training with Katiba

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122 Major General (Retired) Abdul Mastaan.

Mujahid and both are now affiliated with each other. On 20 February 1971, highest military award of Jordan *Kokab-E-Aula* was awarded to the regiment, also seventeen officers and soldiers were decorated with Vissam-E-Istaqlal by the King Hussain. Lieutenant Colonel Iqbal, Majors Basit, Altaf and Captain Habib Rehman were among the officers along with Subedar Major Muhammad Ahmed, Subedars Muhammad Sakhi, Sajjad Haider, Muhammad Siddique. Havildars Zumard Khan and Muhammad Sharif were decorated with Vissam-e-Istaqlal Class V. Lance Havildar Wazir, Naik Abdul Rehman, Lance Naiks Gul Zaman and Muhammad Farooq and Gunner Muhammad Yasin and NCE Rafiq Masih were also decorated with the award.

Regiment departed Jordan on 21 February 1971. Another salient feature of the Katiba Mujahid during its stay at Jordan was the strong and long lasting bond developed with Brigadier (later COAS and President) Zia Ul Haq who was the brigade commander of own contingent at Jordan. Group Captain Anwar Shamim later Air Chief Marshal of PAF was also serving in Jordan in same time period and a frequent visitor to the Katiba Mujahid.

## **Dacca -1967**

In July 1967, two LAA Batteries were moved to East Pakistan. A new LAA Battery 153 was raised at Chaklala and was made part of 5 LAA which was stationed at Malir. 14 LAA Battery which was part of 13 LAA was also moved. Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Iftikhar Shah narrates ‘. *I was commissioned in 5 LAA and while at Malir I heard about the move and volunteered myself, sole reason being that extra leave ‘Embarkation Leave’ was authorised . Another officer Lieutenant Ahmed also volunteered, Major Agha Salar was our battery commander. Less myself the battery sailed from Karachi along with 40mm Guns. I travelled by air because my commanding officer till last moment was reluctant in letting me go there. It was a*

*Trident aircraft, we flew overhead India, the interesting fact is that the flight while remaining in the Indian airspace was considered as an international flight thus facilitating duty free shopping. Dacca air field was closed due to bad weather thus we landed at Jessore and after clearance landed at Tejgaon'*

At Dacca, the layout was such that opposite to the airport was PAF Mess. A single road runs in a north-south direction. On left at a distance of three mile was the Kurmitola a vantage airfield. On this road were the officers accommodation including GOC 14 Division, the divisional headquarters, officers mess, garrison cinema and at the end was the Kurmitola Airfield and in one of its barrack, 153 and 14 LAA Batteries had their offices. 14 LAA Battery was being commanded by Major Lal Muhammad and 153 by Major Agha Salar. Dacca was peaceful as compared to latter days; however the student agitation was a constant irritant. *'Bengali students were much more educated and mature, one day during curfew, one student came to the divisional headquarters and I had a conversation with him. He was agitated and remarked that, 'he is lagging behind other students as schools are closed". I said, how come you are behind when all education institutions are closed. His answer, I still remember, "I am not talking about locals, I am lagging behind the world". Television was a new thing, we saw the landing on moon by Armstrong at officers mess, it was a great event and much talked about for months. We had our AA Firing ranges at Chittagong, thus we had to travel there. The infrastructure was rudimentary, we had to cross many ravines, our guns and transport was ferried on boats at many places; even railway carriages were ferried in same manner.*

Brigadier Waqar (retired) also served at Dacca with 14 LAA. *'We travelled in groups , one sailing and other flying to Dacca. The pay was good, enough to buy a new car on instalments. Most of*

*our time was spent on administrative works, being detailed as a member on some formation court of inquiries. In one such inquiry, our battery commander stood good to his principles and did not spare even his own course mate who was in station headquarters. By and large there was no urgency in anything and life seems to be passing very peaceful.'*

In August 1969, both LAA Batteries were recalled back to West Pakistan and 43 LAA Regiment was moved from Malir on a tour of duty to East Pakistan.

On 4 May 1969, main body of the **43 LAA Regiment** embarked on Safina Arab to sail to its new station, Dacca, East Pakistan. Voyage lasted for eight days before docking at Chittagong. The Eastern Command Headquarters at Dacca, in reality was a division plus force commanded by, Major General Sahibzada Yaqub Ali Khan. PAF had a full-fledged squadron at Dacca.

*We (43 LAA) were at Karachi when we received orders for move to East Pakistan, infact we were performing the martial law duties and camped at Transit Camp. Lieutenant Colonel Shafaat was our commanding officer., he was originally from 3 PMA Long Course and during his end term break had gone back to India to meet his family at Hyderabad Deccan, while he was there, the Indians attacked Hyderabad and he was inducted in the Hyderabad Army. Later he rejoined PMA and passed out. He was an artist by nature, fond of music, paintings and a highly professional officer who read all the technical pamphlets on 37mm and was a master on its range finder; he used to take classes in the regiment on the subject although he was neither qualified as gunnery instructor nor passed his command and staff course.*

*Our 37mm Guns were parked in the luggage hold of the ship, there were cotton bails also being transported so guns were placed*



*over them. We sailed and reached Chittagong via Colombo, it took us over eleven days. Bengali families going to Dacca were also on the ship, there was a doctor as well on ship; rather aged. Enroute we saw whale and the scene of over hundreds of Dolphin around the ship is a memorable scene even today. Sailors neither hunt nor eat dolphin as they are regarded as angels of sea; they do not let a person drowned in sea.*

*At Bay of Tunkin we were hit with a severe storm and unknown to the captain the ship hit a rock. We also faced sea sickness on the eight day to an extent that almost entire regiment was suffering. Our canteen contractor was shrewd and he started selling Ichaar at higher price. When we docked at Chittagong Port it was almost noon and Brigadier P.B.Gilani the area commander received us. The port is on the mouth of a river and it is only in high tide that a ship can enter. As we unloaded our guns the ship started sinking and only then it was revealed that there is a small hole which was clogged by the cotton bails due to the weight of our guns. Railways in East Pakistan was narrow gauge and sleeping berths were small for our tall soldiers. It was an eight-ten hours journey on train from Chittagong-Dacca.<sup>123</sup>*

## **Dacca- Summer of 1969**

43 LAA arrived at Dacca at the end of summer; it was the first regiment of Anti-Aircraft Artillery in East Pakistan. Dacca was a lovely city full of green trees, plenty of rainfall, a cultured city with a rich history. Dhoti and a shirt was the standard dress, in food rice and fish was the staple diet which the locals ate with hands, highly dense in population with a poor communication infrastructure. 43 LAA was given the same lines as occupied by previous LAA Batteries. Officers were allowed to take their families with them and four of them were allotted official bungalows all with vast lawns and

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123 Maj (Retd) Arif Hameed 43 LAA.

without any boundary wall. Local domestic help was very cheap. There were no small arms firing range at Dacca and troops carried out firing practice at Jessore which consumed over four hours of journey one way. Mud was a precious commodity in Dacca and was sold at quite a price, grass would grow at an alarming rate thus it had to be cut and even sprayed to keep it within limits. Dacca, all around was encircled with small water channels. *I would on Sunday take my wife out for a drive, after twenty odd miles we had to cross the water channels which we used to do it by ferrying our car....the impact of monsoon can be gauged that for a fortnight we had to use a Noakha (a small boat) to reach our offices from our mess.*

Initially for three months the 43 LAA hired a civil house to be utilised as a Bachelors Mess later they were accommodated in 14 Division Mess and were given the responsibility to run it also. Regiment also had its field mess at the Tejgaon.

43 LAA was deployed at the Tejgaon Dacca the main airfield, PIA was operating its daily flights from here, PAF also had its main operational base at the same airfield. Three miles away was another small airfield known as Kurmitola where a new airport was under construction, it was almost complete High trees posed a dilemma for the Anti-Aircraft gunners. The very first raised platform for anti-aircraft guns were thus developed by the 43 LAA, it created a tactical debate as traditionally the guns have been deployed in dug-in pits. Colonel Iftikhar (Later major general and GOC AA) came from SAAA to have a look at the raised pit. He studied almost all night and in the morning while he was going back to airport, he approved the new tactics by citing from one of the pamphlet 'you have cleared field of fire and it is written'.

## **B-5 Gun Position**

A 37mm Gun was deployed at the edge of the Tejgaon Airport, it was raised to 20 feet camouflage with creepers, having ammunition

boxes in bunkers also camouflaged. It soon gained popularity, one major reason was that it was visible from a distance and quite popular among the foreign journalists. General Niazi was a regular visitor to the 43 LAA Field Mess, while departing and arriving from out station, he would have cup of tea and shared his much famous jokes. His staff announced that on such and such date General Niazi would be visiting the B5 Gun Position. Havildar Jaffar Shah was the No.1 of this gun position, he had few pigeons as pet and before the visit, he was conveyed to remove them and it was cross checked too. General Niazi was rather out of breath while climbing the steep steps made of jute bags. He was given a briefing by the Battery Commander Major Waheed, someone tripped the basket and out flew half a dozen pigeons to the bewilderment of everyone but more to the commanding officer. Havildar Jaffar Shah immediately ordered 'Take position' and the gun crew jumped and started laying on the pigeons. 'Sir these pigeons are for practicing the gunners in laying on the aircraft' was Jaffar Shah's explanation. General Niazi was not only happy but also impressed with this ingenuity that he not only patted the havildar but also gave cash to the regiment to breed more pigeons.

43 LAA had constructed a steel tower of over sixty feet, a brilliant idea of Lieutenant Colonel Shafaat, one personnel each from AA and PAF would man it, it had a wireless set also, aim was to keep the sky under observation.

In October 1971, the rotation took place between 6 LAA and 43 LAA, both regiments had to change their locations, thus 6 LAA moved out from West Pakistan in batteries and vice versa 43 LAA also arrived back to Karachi in same manner. As the events move much faster thus this rotation was never fully completed and 6 LAA at Dacca had one LAA battery of 43 LAA under its command and similarly 43 LAA also had one LAA battery of 6 LAA under its command in West Pakistan.

## *Chapter Five*

### **East Pakistan-1971**

On 4<sup>th</sup> May 1969, main body of the **43 LAA Regiment** embarked on Safina Arab to sail to its new station, Dhaka, East Pakistan. Voyage lasted for eight days before docking at Chittagong. The Eastern Command Headquarters at Dacca, in reality was a division plus force commanded by, Major General Sahibzada Yaqub Ali Khan. PAF had a full-fledged squadron at Dacca. The Ack Ack Regiment in East Pakistan was employed in Cyclone Relief duties June 1970 brought floods of unprecedented magnitude. With the arrival of monsoon it looked like the whole country between Ganges and Barhamputra was covered by vast sheet of water with cities and towns popping up like marooned islands. Rail and road traffic had come to a stand still and the only communication was by boats or air. In December 1970 General elections were held in Pakistan including East Pakistan.

One LAA Battery was deployed at Ghoripur (Mymen Singh), second LAA battery was heli lifted to Dacca and third LAA Battery supervised elections at Munshi Ganj. On 4<sup>th</sup> February 1971, India banned all Pakistan flights over her territory in protest against the blowing up a hijacked Indian airliner. The Indian government's unilateral decision and her constant threats for compensation of blown up plane created the alarming situation, owing to which the regiment was ordered to move to Dacca airfield. By 19<sup>th</sup> February 1971, early in the morning, the 43 LAA Regiment was deployed at Dacca airfield for security and protection of the Dacca airfield against any internal or external activities of the hostile elements. After Mujib's announcement of disobedience campaign, 43 LAA took the administration of the Airfield. Five attacks on the Airfield took place by rebels which included a combined strength of 500

men. All attacks were repelled and Gunner Mumtaz Hussain was martyred during one of the attack. India was expected to attack the Airfield on 27, 28<sup>th</sup> May 1971. Resultantly Gun positions and their camouflage around the Airfield were strengthened. Attack did not materialised for the time being.

160 LAA Battery was entrusted with the task of enrolling, motivating, and training of patriotic Bengalis and Beharis into a force called Razakars. 161 LAA Battery was entrusted with the task of enrolling, training and activating eight Mujahid Companies to supplement ground forces at Dacca Air field.

**Operation “Allah Di”.** 43 LAA was the first of the AA Unit to be employed in ground role, it carried out raids and operations against rebels. The area Allah Di was thickly populated with anti-state elements who were fully armed with automatic weapons and had prepared defenses using the natural obstacle of a river and water logged area. The Commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Shafaat Ali along with the Commander Artillery Eastern Command Brigadier S.S.A Qasim supervised the operation. Although about 100 rebels were killed and few captured, yet not a single child woman or innocent person was hurt. The area was brought under state control after a tough fight on difficult terrain crossing a big natural obstacle such as Mirpur River under heavy fire by the rebels. The other major action was undertaken by the unit in gen area Tongi where a train was derailed and went hostage under armed rebellions. The unit was entrusted the task of clearing the area. For this purpose a company of Frontier Force Regiment was put under command. The operation was planned and supervised by Lieutenant Colonel Shafaat. A tough battle for about four hours continued in adverse climatic conditions. About 60 miscreants were eliminated and area brought under state control. Again during this operation not a single child, woman, old man or innocent Bengali was hurt. The injured

rebels were provided with medical treatment available in the area arranged on humanitarian grounds.<sup>124</sup> Gunner Muhammad Akbar, after putting up a brave fight with rebels got martyred.

**AA Defence at Dacca Air Base.** As the situation on the borders of East Pakistan became tense and all out Indian aggression was expected, therefore an intensive work of preparation of raised gun positions and “pakka” bunkers started. The regiment was given task of providing AA protection to, Dacca air base along with PAF installations., Mirpur Radar Station. Kurmitola Radar Station alongwith Air Base and Chittagong Sea Port including complex of refineries and Civil Airport.

Tejgaon and Kurmitola airstrips were constructed in 1941, Tejgaon later developed as the only airport in East Pakistan in use for both PIA and PAF. It was located close to the city (Dacca University, Dhan Mandi and HQ Eastern Command). Kurmitola is 11 miles further north east of Tejgaon and a single road passes through the golf course and suburbs of Dacca. Mirpur Radar Station was five miles north of Tejgaon. In ordinary environments the distances are not much but under the hostile civil population they were more than a day’s journey.

All ranks worked round the clock for months together and subsequently were able to produce the formidable AA defences. 43 LAA was visited by *Lieutenant General Tikka Khan*, *Lieutenant General A.A.K Niazi*, *Major General Kazi Majeed*, *Air Marshall A. Rahim Khan* then C-in-C PAF, *General Abdul Hamid* then Chief-Of-Staff Pakistan Army and *Admiral Sharif Khan* then Naval Flag Staff Officer for East Pakistan.

PAF had one squadron No.14 Squadron PAF (16xSabres F-86E) at Dacca. There was one army aviation squadron also at Dacca. No. 4 Squadron comprising of four Mi-8s and four Alouettes helicopters.

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124 War Diary 43 LAA, Digest of Service 43 LAA.

**6 Light AA Regiment Artillery** replaced 43 Light AA Regiment Artillery middle of November 1971. 43 Light AA Regiment Artillery less 161 Battery sailed to West Pakistan during the second half of October.

Advance party of the Regiment under the dynamic command of Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Afzal Khan, SJ (Later Brigadier) moved to Dacca in the end of October 1971 from Sargodha Cantonment.

Lieutenant Atta Muhammad (lieutenant colonel SJ) being the junior most officer was among the advance party , *‘I was recently posted to the 6 LAA from 20 LAA at Tal. I reported to the 6 LAA at Malir in last week of September 1971. On 3/4<sup>th</sup> October 1971 we flew from Karachi and reached Dacca via Colombo (Sri Lanka). At Dacca 43 LAA was still deployed, one battery of this regiment flew back to Karachi on the same aircraft. Tejgaon air field was located at the edge of the Dacca city. Across the runway and terminal was a vehicle depot which had a large ground, one of our troops were deployed there.*

The main body arrived in November 1971 by air. Soon after arriving at Dacca, the planning and deployment procedure began. There was one runway to be protected and the AA defence therefore, had to conform to its shape. The built up area and water ponds all around the airfield made it very difficult to deploy the guns in the conventional manner. Most importantly, 6 LAA again had to undergo refresher training.

21 Light AA Battery and 34 Light AA Battery less one troop were deployed astride the main runway of Tejgaon (Dacca) air field. The Master Command Post was sited in the middle of the air field on a raised ground alongside the runway. Dacca Air Field. The only air field which could be used by fighter aircraft. A squadron of F-86

Sabres was deployed at the air field. It was provided AA defence by 21 and 34 Light AA batteries and troop ex 161 Light AA Battery. PAF Radar Station Mirpur. It was provided Air Defence by 161 Light AA Battery less a troop. Kurmitola Air Field. It was an under construction PAF asset, (petrol and Ammunition) was kept there. Lieutenant Adil Akhtar was responsible for the Air Defence of this air field with a troop. Captain Abdul Wahid looked after the troops at Kurmitola before the war. When war broke out, Lieutenant Adil Akhtar was assigned the Command of the Troop.

## **Chittagong**

Captain Anwar along with Naib Subedar Muhammad Hussain, a Havildar, two Naiks and four gunners (total 7 other ranks) were dispatched in a PIA Fokker aircraft to report to the Chittagong Naval Base which was commanded by Commodore K. M. Hussain. This small contingent was given various types of 13 air defence guns which included 40 MM, 37 MM, 20 MM, 14.5 MM and 12.7 MM guns. Manpower for these weapons was provided by Brigadier Atta Muhammad Malik Commander 91 Infantry Brigade Chittagong which comprised Infantry soldiers from 48 Baloch Regiment, retired recalled soldiers, Naval sailors, Al-Badar and Al-Shams volunteers. The next two months were the period to train these raw troops on the 5 types of air defence guns , operate the wireless equipment and deployment in the operational area. The troops were highly motivated and worked day and night to provide the best possible air defence within the available resources to the air strip, the oil storage tanks and the Naval dockyard.

Brigadier Anwar SJ recalls' *I was posted in 6 LAA at Sargodha from where I was posted to 43 LAA at Dacca, soon after my arrival in Dacca, the 6 LAA was also moved into East Pakistan thus I was happy to be with my regiment again. As luck would have it, the*



*very battery in which I was posted never left East Pakistan thus I was fortunate to fight the war being part of both regiments. At Chittagong, I had a 37mm gun also it was water cooled and on inventory of Pakistan Navy. .303 Rifle was the main weapon of our troops, during my initial days Brigadier Atta Muhammad Malik , Commander 91 Infantry Brigade visited regularly and was a great help. In the short time before the outbreak of the war, the razakars and other civilians were given basic military training and soon I got them fired the Ack Ack guns as well. Guns were deployed in a straight line . I would like to put on record the excellent training which 6 LAA got under Lieutenant Colonel Shaukat Ali at Risalpur which later paid us in war.'*

## **December 1971**

Soon after PAF air attacks on Indian airfields from West Pakistan on the evening of 3 December 1971. The Army Aviation Squadron (No.4) was carrying out its night flying overhead Dacca airfield, They landed back and sure enough the Indian aircraft attacked Dacca Airfield at midnight. The war was on. Same day at about 1000 hours the enemy carried out a massive air raid to render the Dacca Airport inoperative. Anti aircraft gunners(6 Light Ack Ack) and the small flock of Sabre fighters went into action. Some of the most spectacular dog fights were witnessed over Dacca. The large number of foreign reporters present in the city recorded a good account of the vintage Sabre F-86 aircraft of the PAF wrecking havoc on the best of the Russian fighter aircraft of India. As claimed, 17 Indian aircraft were shot down as against two of the PAF.<sup>125</sup>

21 Light AA Battery and 34 Light AA Battery less one troop were deployed astride the main runway of Tejgaon (Dacca) air field. The Master Command Post was sited in the middle of the air field

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125 An illustrated History of Pakistan Army Aviation 1947-2007 . Army Press Islamabad.

on a raised ground alongside the runway. The deployment of the unit was as under:-

**Dacca Air Field.** The only air field which could be used by fighter aircraft. A squadron of F-86 Sabres was deployed at the air field. It was provided AA defence by 21 and 34 Light AA batteries and troop ex 161 Light AA Battery.

**PAF Radar Station Mirpur.** It was provided Air Defence by **161 Light AA Battery** less a troop.

**Karmitola Air Field.** Lieutenant Adil Akhtar was responsible for the Air Defence of this air field with a troop. Captain Abdul Wahid looked after the troops at Kurmitola before the war. When war broke out, Lieutenant Adil Akhtar was assigned the Command of the Troop.

*The Indian Air Force launched its pre-dawn attack on Dacca Airport on 4 December 1971. The Regiment fired a barrage and the attack was repulsed. Through the course of the first day, the Indian Air Force launched approximately 190 sorties on the defended areas at Dacca alone. During the next 12 days the performance of the Regiment was unparalleled and epoch making. The Regiment remained in action continuously throughout the war as the Indian Air Force flew more than 400 sorties over Dacca air field and none of them went unchallenged by the brave men of this Regiment. Consequently, during the war the Jawans of this "Glorious Regiment" brought down 18 Indian aircraft including MIG-21, SU-7, Gnats and Canberra bombers. Similarly troops at Chittagong gave a superlative account of itself by bringing down 3 aircraft, which operated from the Indian aircraft Carrier Vikrant and two Jets of the Indian Air Force carrying their tally to five.<sup>126</sup>*

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126 Regimental History 6 LAA. Also see Lieutenant General Kamal Matinuddin *Tragedy of Errors* Services Book Club 1983, p-440. He gives the figures of total Indian aircraft shot in East Pakistan as 28 out of which 23 were shot down by Ack Ack (6 LAA).

The air attacks on Tejgaon, Kurmitola and Mirpur were intense, among all these Tejgaon was the main target as it was the base for own fighter aircraft. Initially the IAF attacked at night as own aircraft lacked night flying capability. During daytime, 6 LAA was handicapped due to own aircraft also flying in the air. Thus majority of the duels that took place between the gunners and intruding Indians were at night. From 6<sup>th</sup> December 1971 onwards the Indians concentrated on destroying the runway and they were able to achieve their aim. On 7<sup>th</sup> December 1971 with runway being inoperational the PAF had no other option but to send its pilots through an escape plan to West Pakistan.

**Lieutenant Adil Akhtar** (Retired as Lieutenant Colonel). He was troop commander at Kurmitola Air Field where most of the assets of Pakistan Air Force (PAF) were located. It was heavily bombarded day and night. During bombing one of his 37 millimetre gun got seriously damaged which was replaced with one 40 millimetre gun with ample ammunition. His gun position was frequently visited by Commanding Officer and Brigade Commander. Brigade Commander spoke very high of him. On the evening of 15<sup>th</sup> December in the closing hours one Indian Bomber came very low. Lieutenant Adil Akhtar directed the troop to bring fire on the aircraft and consequently got hit and caught fire and fell within 100 yards and the other was believed to have fell four miles away.

**Naib Subedar Muhammad Rehman.** The JCO deserves special mention for outstanding performance of his duties during the war. Not only did he ensure that food and water reached every gun but took special pains to supply ammunition to the guns. He worked constantly under pressure and showed remarkable courage, determination and devotion to duty in the face of the enemy.

**Regiment Havildar Major Ghulam Khan.** In addition to performing his duties as Regiment Havildar Major, this Non-commissioned Officer performed exceptional duties in the Master Command Post ensuring high standard of administration, efficiency and keeping the high morale of the unit as a whole. He showed marvelous courage, determination and efficiency and it was mainly due to his tireless efforts that Master Command Post was in complete control of all guns.

**Havildar Muhammad Nawaz.** On 15 December, 4 x Indian Air Force Canberras attacked the Karmitola air field and fired on the oil tanks, resultantly causing fire to these oil tanks. He fired with 40 mm Gun and destroyed 1 x Canberra and averted major damage.

**Naik Abdullah.** During the war, whenever enemy aircraft attacked the asset, he being layer number of the gun, used to fly the red flag to get the attention of the pilots. During one such attack, his position was attacked by SU-7, the aircraft was destroyed and he celebrated its destruction while dancing on the gun.

**Naik Fakhr Ud Din.** On hearing the sad news of surrender, he before leaving his gun opened fire on the standing F-86 Sabers of PAF on the runway, thereby destroying them on ground and not allowing them to be taken over by Indians intact.

**Naik Fateh Muhammad.** He worked day and night often without food or rest to ensure maximum efficiency of Regiment communications. For his courage and exceptional performance of his duties in the face of the enemy the Non-commissioned Officers deserve to be a war hero of 1971.

*As a war correspondent it has been my great desire to see aircraft shot down by anti aircraft guns. Today when I am watching the duels between Indian Pilots and Pakistani Gunners I can see the aircraft falling like toys.*<sup>127</sup>

127 Carl Hollingworth - *Daily Telegraph* - 5 December 1971

*All hats are off to AA gunners of the Pakistan Army, who played an extremely admirable role in support of the Pakistan Air Force pilots in the air battles over Dacca. In this modern age when Surface to Air Missiles seems to make AA guns obsolete to fight war, the performance of 6 Light AA gunners will be recorded in pages of modern warfare history in golden words<sup>128</sup>*

### **Prisoner Camp No. 57 India. 1971-1974**

On 17<sup>th</sup> December 1971, all officers and men of 6 Light AA were present in Army Aviation helicopter parking area in Dacca. They were surrounded by the Indian Army. In the meantime, they were attacked by the rebels “Mukti Bahinis” who were repulsed by the soldiers and officers of 6 Light AA Regiment. The very next day, the personal weapons of all individuals were confiscated by the Indian Army. Regiment was kept in Dacca for about three weeks.

In early January 1972, Regiment was moved by steamer to Narain Ganj and from Narain Ganj to Golando Ghatt and all prisoners were stripped of their ranks, medals and shoulder badges. Unit moved from Golando Ghatt to Faridpur Railway station on foot. From Faridpur, unit was taken to an unknown location by train. The train was completely sealed during the journey, the Indian Army soldiers pounced weapons upon the prisoners and snatched away their watches, money and other belongings. On reaching the unknown place unit was shifted to Camp number 57 which had five more sectors namely A, B, C, D and E. The D sector had maximum concentration of 6 Light AA Regiment, officers were kept in prisoner of war camp 58. Although the time in prison was difficult but men of 6 Light AA Regiment found it an opportunity to heal their spiritual side by learning and reciting Holy Quran from a Naval Petty Officer Muhammad Nawaz.

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128 East Wing - *Morning News* - 6 December 1971

During the imprisonment, two of the soldiers Naik Fakhar Ud Din and Lance Naik Manzoor Ahmed tried to escape, Naik Fakhar was successful in crossing the barbed wire but Lance Naik Manzoor was detected as a result both were caught. They were taken to E sector and were tortured.

Captain Anwar Khan who was at Chittagong narrates his ordeal. *‘two Indian officers came by road and later took us to Calcutta railway station on buses. We were transported in a train which was sealed and nothing could be seen outside. They later took us to Ramngarh and we were imprisoned in Camp No.25. This camp was looked after by Indian Navy. Other PN officers with me in the camp included G.Z Malik and Taj Muhammad both later admirals. After two and half years in the camp we were repatriated and I after arriving at Wahgah, I stayed a night or two in Lahore. I rode motorcycle after a gap of two and half years while going to Saddar to buy new clothes and shoes. was taken to Kharian where I stayed for another two months and then I was posted to 13 LAA which was at Peshawar.*

In the Prisoners of War Camp No.57 on the eve of Eid Ul Azha, Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Afzal Khan, then Commanding Officer of 6 Light AA Regiment told the Indians that he wanted to meet his soldiers. He was taken to D sector where he addressed the unit. On reaching the D sector, Havildar Major gave the caution of “Attention” at which soldiers were looking down and pressed their feet quite grimly. Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Afzal Khan on seeing this spoke to his men. *Do not look down, look up and match your eyes with mine. In war, you either win or lose. Why should we look down, we are not in prison for being guilty of theft, rampage or rapine. We have fought a war, we have shot down dozens of enemy’s aircraft. If ordered in future, we will do again and stand for our country like a Bulwark”.*

According to the Shimla agreement, prisoners from both sides were exchanged in January 1974. Once the turn of 6 Light AA Regiment came, soldiers were happy for joining their homeland.

Following officers were serving in 6 Light Air Defence Regiment during 1971 War

**Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Afzal, SJ**, , Major Agha Salar Ahmer Shah, Major Syed Saghir Hussain ,Major Mehmood Ahmed, Major Syed Iqbal Shah , **Major Muhammad Fahim Khan Durrani, SJ**, .Major Mustajab Hussain, Major Muhammad Tahzib, Major Ghulam Mustafa, Major Arshad Ahmad, Captain Abdul Wahid, Captain Zulifqar , Captain Abdul Rashid Malik, Captain Islam Ul Haq, Captain Muhammad MA Farooqi, Captain GM Meken, Captain Syed Tahir Hussain Mashhadi, Captain Muhammad Javed Captain Asif Rashid, Captain Muhammad Mahmood, Captain Muhammad Anwar SJ, Lieutenant Adil Akhtar, **Lieutenant Atta Muhammad Awan SJ**

### **1971 War - Western Air Bases**

1971 is a year which has left many lessons and bitter memories in the heart of every Pakistani; nation had to wage a war against India to protect its sovereignty. At the end of fourteen days war, East Pakistan took birth as a new country Bangladesh. From 1969 onwards it was becoming obvious among the officers in Pakistan military that sooner or later the war will break out; only question was when and where. From dawn of 1971, the political situation in the country especially in East Pakistan became extremely polarised with Sheikh Mujib demanding autonomy. On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1971, East Pakistan was placed under a martial law and Mujib was arrested, the unrest spread across the province , with the support of India for separatists, it became violent. India on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1971 started

intruding into East Pakistan territory which resulted in an air attack launched from West Pakistan on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1971; thus third Pakistan- India war started . One key feature of the year long civil armed unrest in East Pakistan was the fermentation of acute ethnic divide between the Bengalis and non-Bengalis.

Anti Aircraft artillery had undergone a transition in between these two wars, most obvious being the induction of 37 mm and 14.5 mm guns; however these guns had not totally replaced the 40mm Bofors thus a combination of all three guns were deployed. Seven more AA Regiments were raised since 1965 War including two heavy ack ack regiments (41 HAA and 52 HAA) , one (SP) LAA (67 SP LAA) and four LAAs namely 43 LAA, 58 LAA, 74 LAA and 75 LAA. Overall making a total of 14 anti aircraft regiments of various calibres. There were three independent LAA Batteries also namely 403 Independent (old 82 LAA Battery) 310 ILAA Battery and 153 ILAA Battery. Another major change from past were the eight Janbaz Anti Aircraft Batteries. First of these Janbaz Battery was raised in the dying moments of 1965 War at Sargodha. These Janbaz batteries in fact reflects the true spirit of anti aircraft defences. In England during WWII, the entire homeland ack ack defence revolved around these batteries which were manned by the locals and they were static in nature. Same principle was partially adopted in post 1965 War in Pakistan. In February 1971, all seven such Janbaz Batteries were given firing practice at Muzaffargarh Ranges under supervision of 19 (SP) LAA. *'they were given practice on 40mm Bofors, the batteries came in rotation without their guns. We were three officers at the range, myself, Major Jahanzeb who was the overall officer in charge and Captain Doctor Mujeeb. These Janbaz batteries displayed good standard of fire and their discipline was also good.'*<sup>129</sup>

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129 General Retired Ehsan Ul Haq, narrated in July 2019.



Organisationally there was no major change similar to 1965 War, there was still only one anti aircraft brigade namely 3 Independent Anti Aircraft Brigade to man the air defence of the country. 3 Ack Ack Brigade had its headquarters at Malir Karachi and only a week before the outbreak of war, it moved to Sargodha. Brigadier Iftikhar Muhammad (later major general) was the commander, he was posted from AA School in July and was promoted. Tactically the deployment pattern was also similar to the past war, thus bulk of anti aircraft regiments were for the defence of PAF airbases. These air bases had increased in number from the past, thus Shorkot, Mianwali and Risalewala were new air bases to be defended apart from Mauripur, Sargodha and Peshawar. The radar installations also remained same, one radar at Korangi, one at Badin and one at Sakesar however there were few mobile Radars to be defended. Unlike in the past war, when there was no AA defence against high altitude bombers, this time with the raising of two HAA regiments (41 HAA and 52 HAA) this shortcoming was overcome to a great extent.

The induction of 37mm Guns was not very smooth, in July 1967 the guns were inducted and within three months they were taken away and 40mm Bofors were re-inducted. In July 1971, again the Bofors were taken away and 37mm were inducted back. 37mm Guns also brought a change in the organisation of the regiment, instead of three batteries now the LAA Regiments had four batteries of 12 gun each. The standard gun detachment now comprised of seven gunners. This change required extensive training and firing practice. 20 LAA carried out firing at Muzaffargarh in September 1971. Another regiment to undergo this last minute change was 58 LAA, which was issued with 37mm in September 1971.<sup>130</sup> 58 LAA had twelve 37mm twin barrel, twenty-four 37mm single barrel and twelve 14.5 mm four barrels guns. In October 1971, Bengali gunners

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130 Digest of Service 58 LAA

in AA were being replaced with West Pakistani gunners, 150 gunners were taken out from 58LAA and posted to 6 LAA, as the later was moving to East Pakistan.<sup>131</sup> On 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1971 at 1300 hours an emergency was declared by President General Muhammad Yahya Khan , resultantly all officers and soldiers were recalled from leave. On 3<sup>rd</sup> December at 1715 hours own jets attacked Indian air fields and radar sites at Pathan Kot, Adam Pur , Amritsar, Srinagar and Aventipura *Mrs Gandhi said the town of Agra, 120 miles south of New Delhi, and the site of the Taj Mahal, had been hit.*<sup>132</sup>

### **Sargodha 5 LAA, 52 HAA and 20 LAA Regiments**

Sargodha after 1965 War had permanent deployment of two AA Regiments, one LAA and other a HAA. Anti aircraft Regiments were deployed at Sargodha air base since first week of February 1971 The 5 LAA was undercommand Lieutenant Colonel Shuja Haider Gillani. 52 HAA was being commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Jahan Khan Bajwa with Major Amir Khan as 2IC, Captain Bashir Nasim as adjutant, the three HAA Batteries were being commanded by Major Muhammad Farooq (187 HAA Battery), Major Ghulam Murtaza (188 HAA Battery) and Major Ejaz Kayani (189 HAA Battery) . As both regiments were deployed for almost a year at the base, thus they had undergone extensive training and conducted exercises with PAF; this helped in improving the weaknesses and shortcomings of regiments.

The writing was on the wall, all ranks knew that war is imminent. Platforms were raised 9-12 feet to clear the observation and guns were positioned to fire over runway at 30°. Sargodha was also supplemented with 20 LAA Regiment. The 20 LAA was stationed at Thal and was oved to Rawalpindi in February 1971 as its peace

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131 Digest of Service 58 LAA

132 [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/december/3newsid\\_2519000/2519133.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/december/3newsid_2519000/2519133.stm)

location , shortly it was ordered to move to Sargodha .20 LAA also had to undergo a change of command just months before the war, Lieutenant Colonel Rafiq Khattak was posted to east Pakistan and in September 1971 Lieutenant Colonel A.R.Sheikh took over the command. On the eve of war, only one battery 52 LAA (ex 20 LAA) was deployed at Sargodha whereas the RHQ, 51 LAA Battery and newly raised 301 LAA Battery were deployed at Mianwali. Two more LAA Batteries of 20 LAA were deployed at Sakesar and Kallar Kahar.

## **First Raid**

At 2230 hours on **3<sup>rd</sup> December 1971** the early warning came from SOC that enemy aircraft are approaching from South-East, guns were put on Hold Fire as own jets roared to take head on the approaching aircraft. An hour later at 2335 hours, the warning again came with guns being given Free to Fire status. A formation of IAF (one Canberra, two SU-7) were spotted on Radar, guns initially fired an Umbrella Barrage.

Lieutenant Mehboob Haider (late major) *‘It was a beautiful night with full moon with specks of clouds. It was my first experience of war, the motivation was high and soldiers were waiting for the enemy jets. The jets came from Kirana Hill direction and all of a sudden the entire sky was lit up with our fire, the guns roar was deafening but pleasant to the ears. I saw one enemy aircraft being hit . The night was long, the second wave of Indians came an hour later but it was chased away by our own jets. The scene of own jets taking off is still engraved in my memory.’*

IAF after the first raid (2230 hours), carried out successive attacks on the Sargodha Base. Attacks came at 2335 hours, followed by 0056 hours, 0205 hours, 0530 hours and 0645 hours. The 4<sup>th</sup> December 1971 daylight went without any raid. Two aircrafts

including SU-7 were shot down.<sup>133</sup> **Gunner Aman Ullah (5 LAA)** embraced Shahadat the same night. Indians were unable to hit the base in a decisive manner, they were marinating 2000-2500 feet of AGL and as such their bombing was erratic. Few bombs felt on the side of runway. The last attack at 0645 hours, the bombs fell on the Police Lines and Civil Lines adjacent to the base, resultantly ten policemen and civilians were killed.<sup>134</sup> HAA guns engaged two raids out of the four, the reason for not opening up on the two raids was their low height ‘two raids were too low to be engaged by HAA Guns but the remaining two raids were engaged and one enemy aircraft was damaged’.<sup>135</sup>

#### **4/5 December 1971**

The day was spent by the Ack Ack gunners on the guns, defences were improved, the commanding officers, battery commanders visited each gun position to raise the morale of troops and to assess the situation. The layout at base, had the two HAA Batteries at the edges of the runways with the third one in the middle. LAA was also paired with these HAA Batteries, all in all no less than 100 guns of varying calibre were defending the base.

At 2235 hours on 4<sup>th</sup> December the first of the night arid came, a formation of four aircraft followed by a single intruder at 2350 hours. At 0012 hours another wave attacked, as our early warning was effective thus every time the IAF came down it was greeted with Umbrella Barrage fire. IAF was able to inflict minor damage at 0122 hours when it dropped bomb near MET Radar, two barracks were blown off.<sup>136</sup> The last arid came at Sargodha Base at 0129 hours on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1971. Apart from these raids the early warning was given for more raids but they were tackled by own jets and as such the guns were kept on Hold Fire.

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133 War Diary 5 LAA Regiment

134 War Diary 5 LAA Regiment

135 War Diary 52 HAA Regiment

136 War Diary 5 LAA

## **A Long Night 5/6 December 1971**

On this very night no less than seventeen enemy raids came on the Sargodha Air Base.<sup>137</sup> First raid came in the daylight at 050935 December 1971, then the day was spent waiting for the intruders. At 1837 hours the raid came with darkness falling around followed by raids at 1918 hours, 2051 hours, 2121 hours, 2121 hours, 2134 hours, 2154 hours, 2231 hours, 2334 hours, 0010 hours, 0021 hours, 0031 hours, 0033 hours, 0045 hours. 0213 hours and last two arids came at daw at 060524 hours and 060530 hours. In certain cases own jets intercepted the Indians however the raid at 1837 hours was engaged by own guns and one aircraft was hit and the other night raids were also defended with Ack Ack fire during which one enemy aircraft was hit. The two raids at dawn dropped their payload near Sultan Mill and at Satellite Town.

On 6<sup>th</sup> December 1971 apart from two early morning raids two more raids came, one at 2135 hours and other at 2333 hours. From 7<sup>th</sup> December till the ceasefire on 17<sup>th</sup> December no further raids came on the Sargodha Air Base.

## **Karachi**

Karachi the commercial and naval hub of the country required much more than mere guns to protect its installations. There were three active air fields and bases, naval dockyards, railway junctions, oil storage sites, the city itself was spread over thirty odd miles. Two HAA Batteries (41 HAA), three LAA Batteries (74 LAA) and a newly raised 310 Independent LAA Battery were certainly not enough but that was all that could be spared for the city. **41 HAA** was undercommand Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ayub Khan, regiment had three HAA Batteries (154,155 and 156), two were deployed at Mauripur and the third 156 HAA Battery was at Peshawar.

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137 War Diary 5 LAA

74 LAA was being commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Mirza Afzal Baig with Major agha Masood Hassan (major general) as 2IC, Captain Itesham Haque as adjutant. Regiment had four LAA Batteries, three were deployed at Mauripur, (259 undercommand Major Ali Ahmed, 261 undercommand Major Ahmed Sultan and 304 undercommand Major Hussein Iqbal the fourth LAA Battery (260) undercommand Major Riaz was deployed at Chaur Kana in support of PAF Squadron No.400

Lieutenant General retired Khateer was posted alongwith Captain Ali Asghar from 41 HAA in October 1971 to newly raised 310 Independent LAA Battery, he narrates. *‘From the beginning of the year 1971 we (41 HAA) were deployed at Masroor Base. Our deployment was spread over the base and Manora Island. My HAA Battery was at Manora, our regimental headquarters were at Masroor Base. We had line communication with the RHQ, at that time the road link with Manora Island was through a marsh which allowed four wheel movement in fair weather. My Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Ayub was very particular about keeping the communication intact at all times. Once the line was broken and myself and my JCO had to physically walk the ten odd miles along the line to find the fault. We took over six hours to fix the fault, it was close to the RHQ. In the end CO was kind enough to give us a jeep to go back to our battery location.’* On the raising of the 310 LAA Battery, Lieutenant General Khateer highlights that *‘The Pakistan Navy did not had enough of resources and manpower to have AA defences for the harbour, thus a new battery was raised, guns were provided by the PN and manpower acme from AA Brigade. When I reported at the 310 LAA Battery, we lacked communication sets, we established our office, operational room and Observation Post on the roof top of a naval installation and we as a battery fought the war from that roof top.’*

Karachi came under Indian air attack on the dawn of 4<sup>th</sup> December 1971 when at 0420 hours, three Canberra bombed Masroor, they flew low level to avoid Radar detection but were picked up and as such the raid was not a surprise. Bombs were off the airfield; they used 'delay bombs' thus few bombs went off after an hour. Own HAA and LAA opened fire and were able to deter the enemy aircraft. At 0830 hours the oil tanks at Karachi harbour were hit by enemy airforce, two tanks caught fire; it was quite a task to overcome the fire which took two days to die down. This fire acted as a beacon for the enemy airforce for direction keeping.

In the evening at 1700 hours, five enemy aircraft carried level bombing at Masroor, they were engaged by own AA guns. One of LAA gun received a cluster of bullets from the aircraft resultantly Captain Shabih Haider and five soldiers were injured. The valour of OCU Aslam, needs special praise, he irrespective of enemy strafing and not caring about his own safety, single handedly ran to evacuate the injured from the gun position and in the process also received injuries which later proved fatal. The entire night was spent on the guns, more than anything it was the sheer excitement of finally facing the enemy and proving own worth.

On 5<sup>th</sup> December first raid came at 0415 hours when three enemy aircraft 'carried level bombing', one Canberra was shot down by LAA fire by detachments of A5, A6 and A7. There were no raids during day time, after dark the first enemy formation appeared at 2207 hours. One Canberra was shot down by detachment of 74 LAA. Lance Havildar Ali Akbar Shah, Lance Havildar Nisar Hussain and Havildar Muhammad Nawaz. On the night 5/6 December, two more raids came at Masroor Base, one at 0200 hours and other at 0400 hours.

Morning of 6<sup>th</sup> December 1971 went without any action however at sunset the largest formation so far in the war appeared from

east, there were no less than a dozen Indian aircraft<sup>138</sup> which split themselves and attacked various targets in the city. Surprisingly no major loss was incurred. Perhaps the turning point of the air war occurred on the night 7/8 December when Indian Navy missile boats fired couple of missiles which hit own oil tanks at the harbour, eight oil tanks caught fire and this fire remained alive for another week. From 9<sup>th</sup> December onwards the intensity of air raids dropped dramatically, there was only one raid on 9<sup>th</sup> December at 0300 hours and on 10<sup>th</sup> December only harbour area was targeted by Indians. Last raid of war occurred at 2030 hours on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1971, hours before the ceasefire.

The civil life in Karachi was partially disturbed, the early warning sirens would blow across the city, all windows in the houses were either painted black or plastered with black paper. There were volunteers who would impose the blackout. In daytime people would flock to the sites of bombing, like Kala Bridge near railway station. The inferno at harbour was visible from the remotest edge of the city, there was no shortage of rumours as well. Dog fight on the evening of 6<sup>th</sup> December 1971 was witnessed by the people of the city from rooftops with prayers and morale boosting slogans for army and airforce.

A total of 11469 rounds of 37 millimetre and 15614 rounds of 14.5 millimetre guns were fired by the Regiment during the war.<sup>139</sup>

### **Badin (58 LAA)**

Initially, on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1971, two batteries were deployed at Badin for PAF Radar Station and one battery (213 LAA Battery) was deployed at Chota Malir, by first week of March 1971, battery moved from Malir and was deployed at Pir Patho to defend a low level Radar of PAF. In August 1971, the regiment (less 213 LAA

<sup>138</sup> War Diary 74 LAA.

<sup>139</sup> War Diary 74 LAA.



Battery) was concentrated at Badin. Mujahids were also infused with the regulars.

Lieutenant Colonel H.Hashmi was the commanding officer he had assumed command in June 1970 so he was well-versed with the equipment and men, he had been serving in Air Observation Corps (Air OP). Major Victor Samuel was the 2IC he was posted out on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1971. The regiment had been reorganised on four battery in July 1971, there were thus four LAA Batteries, 163 LAA Battery was being commanded by Major Khalil Rehman and also by Major Rasheed Beg( major general), 213 LAA battery was undercommand Major Waqar Naveed (brigadier), Major J.R.Burki (major general) was in command of 214 LAA Battery and Major Habib Rehman was commanding 303 LAA Battery. Among the officers were Captains Mussarat Khaliq, Abdul Rauf, Amjad Latif, Ernest Shams, Asaf Jamil, Abdul Jabbar Lashkar, Muhammad Masud. Duties of adjutant were being performed by Captain Naeem Rehman and Lieutenant Mushtaq Gardezi was the quarter master. 2/Lieutenant Mustafiz ur Rehman was the youngest officer in the regiment. Muhammad Anwar was the Subedar Major (SM), other Subedars included were Muhamamd Khalil, Amir Kabal and Khalid Masud.

On 4 December 1971 at 0833 hours, first air raid took place comprising of three Hunters, ‘they came at low level from SSE along Kadhan Road and then turned towards the VP at low level’<sup>140</sup>, no damage occurred to the VP due to effective fire. On the same day, second raid by two Gnats took place at 1701 hours, ‘they came low and strafed the gun positions’. *It was a classic duel between the aircraft and the ack ack guns, aircraft were spotted at short distance and as guns opened fire so did the aircraft and it was all over within a minute or two.* Mujahid Langar Khan was on 14.5mm , he was able to hit the aircraft and in the process was also injured due to splinters. One Gnat was damaged, ‘pilot was heard on PAF sets

140 War Diary 58 LAA.

reporting to his wingman that he has been hit'.<sup>141</sup> After the first day, Lieutenant Colonel Hashmi analysed the situation and the four guns which he had deployed as deception in depth were pulled forward and placed on the likely approach. The Badin and surrounding area is flat and void of any flight safety hazards which are in abundance in major towns like high tension wires and wireless towers or high rise buildings. Thus Indians adopted low level attack tactics.

Third raid on the VP was made by three Hunters on 6 December 1971 at 0805 hours, it came as a surprise because no warning was passed by the Control, however as all the guns were being manned and own air sentries were also posted therefore enemy was unable to achieve its aim. One aircraft was shot down and debris were collected by the unit in the same evening. Fourth raid was made by three Indian aircraft on 7 December 1971 at 0937 hours, 'aircraft were unidentified , they adopted the same tactics as in previous attacks, as the guns opened fire they turned back'<sup>142</sup> and managed to escape unhurt.

On 9<sup>th</sup> December at mid-day, own 303 LAA Battery was ordered to move to Jacobabad to defend the air base. Move was completed and defences at Badin were readjusted. We moved at noon, the distance to Jacobabad was quite long and under the constant threat of enemy air raids. We did not had our full baggage rather we travelled light. Air sentries were posted on each vehicle to give warning of aircraft. Enroute they had few false alarms , '*our action was to immediately halt and take positions on our guns, instead of taking cover under any tree, the vehicles halted in the mid of the road, with guns immediately unhooked and ready to fire*'. On 10<sup>th</sup> December , 213 LAA Battery at Pir Patho was also moved to strengthen the defences at Jacobabad

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141 War Diary 58 LAA.

142 War Diary 58 LAA.

Three MIG 21s made the fifth raid on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1971 at 1426 hours, enemy aircraft changed their tactics and approached from North. One of the MIG was hit which was later crashed at Talhar about 15 miles from Badin. The sixth raid on the VP was made by two MIG 21s and six Hunters on 12 December 1971 at 1214 hours. They approached from EES direction, MIGs led the raid, they bombed, strafed and rocketed the VP. Eight bombs of 500 pounds were dropped out of which six exploded, raid lasted for over ten minutes; yet they failed to hit the VP. One aircraft was shot as later PAF confirmed that they have heard the transmission of ‘Indian pilot transmitting I am hit to his formation leader’.<sup>143</sup> Seventh raid was launched by two MIG 21s and five Hunters at 1010 hours on 13 December 1971. No damage was caused to the VP and the intruders managed to escape. The eighth and final raid was made on the same afternoon by four MIG 21s at 1605 hours. Indians adopted a novel tactics of sending one aircraft ahead to deceive the defenders ‘ *it flew over the VP, Indians for the first time since the outbreak of war changed their tactics and gained height to observe the VP, it failed , because as soon as the MIG gained height it was shot down.* One of the MIG 21 serial No 705 was hit and brought down in flames. It crashed about 1500 yards away from the gun position. The pilot was burnt completely.<sup>144</sup>

Though 37 mm guns were considered as inaccurate, but due to concentration of fire power, the guns were able to shot down MIG-21s. Early warning system was not very effective during the war, the gunners were able to recognize the hostile aircraft thus they shot down aircraft.<sup>145</sup> 14.5 mm proved to be a real asset, as the raids were made low level thus it allowed the gunners to fire accurately.

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143 The recorded transmission is with GCI at Badin, War Diary 58 LAA.

144 War Diary 58LAA. The MiG is now a war trophy with the regiment.

145 War Diary 58 LAA.

## Murid

At 1500 hours on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1971 own jets took off from Murid to attack the Indian airfields. 14 Light Anti Aircraft Battery ex13 LAA and 133 Light Anti Aircraft Battery ex 67 LAA (SP) Regiment under Major Bashir Dhariwal were deployed at Murid Base.

First raid on Murid came at 0210 hours (4 December) a pair of Canberra came at medium altitude and bombed the base ineffectively, guns opened up with Barrage Fire. At 0350 hours another formation of Canberra came and at 0526 hours another pair of Canberra were overhead. Early warning regarding these initial three raids were given well in advance and as such they failed to cause any damage. The bombs were dropped few miles away from the main base. However at 1029, the base was taken by surprise, as four Hunters appeared and there was no warning about them, they were able to hit one Sabre on ground which was lined up for take-off. *At that time, two F-86, were ready to take off from the runway. The attacking aircraft fired rocket hitting one of the F-86. It exploded destroying itself and the second F-86 ready for take off parked along with it. Indian hunters later escaped*'.<sup>146</sup>

Murid received two more raids on 4 December, at 1700 hours four Hunters appeared at low level, however the early warning was given thus these hunters were hit with flak. *At 2030 hours Kallar Kahar operational control room gave warning of incoming enemy aircraft from North-East. Two Canberra came at a height of 8000 feet, guns fired barrage and attack was ineffective. However the aircraft dropped a few bombs about three miles away.*<sup>147</sup>

On the same night 4/5 December 1971, at 0200 hours Canberra pair came and flew back without causing any considerable damage,

<sup>146</sup> War Diary 13 LAA.

<sup>147</sup> War Diary 13 LAA.

they dropped their payload two miles away. In the morning at 0700 , four Hunters appeared from South-West at low level, they managed to strafe the runway despite own Ack Ack fire, one Hunter was shot down. At night at 2250 hours, Canberra appeared at 8000 feet AGL, they dropped five bombs of 1000 pounds each in one line narrowly missing the guns of 133 LAA Battery, few bombs were dropped near Murid Village as well. At 0156 Hours (6 December) Guns were being manned in Free state, *'Vulnerable Point (VP) was attacked at low level, two Canberra appeared from East,' they went parallel to the runway about 300-600 yards south of it. They were engaged by the Barrage Fire, they dropped six bombs of 1000 pounds each in one line. They also used time delay bombs as few bombs went off after an hour.'*<sup>148</sup> another raid came at dawn (0505 Hours), enemy appeared from North-East at medium altitude, they were treated with Barrage Fire, these aircraft targeted Balkasar oil fields on their way back.

On 7<sup>th</sup> December at mid-day, guns were High and Tight as formation of own jets were lined up on the runway. Gunner Hamid Khan was manning his gun when he spotted a formation of aircraft coming low from North West, as the guns were on 'tight' thus he waited and then he identified them to be Hunters, he opened fire. Meanwhile the Hunters strafed the runway and amidst this own jet also took off; thus own guns stopped fire. This incident highlights the intricacies of anti aircraft defence of an air field. Guns open fire on specific orders from the SOC, own aircraft are also either homing back or are taking off thus own guns are not given freedom to fire without recognising the aircraft. In this scenario, as own aircraft had also taken off thus the guns had to hold fire.

The last raid on Murid came at 0730 hours on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1971, guns were on Tight situation, Own Sabres (four in number) were ready for take-off when the enemy formation appeared low,

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148 War Diary 13 LAA.

Havildar Muhammad Hussain using his initiative opened fire on the Indian aircraft, he was able to hit one Hunter in the wing, the aircraft disappeared from sky with trailing smoke. However own formation which was fully loaded and in the open was also lost.<sup>149</sup>

## **Mianwali**

20 LAA was converted on 37 mm guns in July 1971, it was organised on three LAA Batteries each having twelve 37mm Guns. In September 1971, two of its batteries were deployed at Kallar Kahar, thus a new LAA battery was raised in October 1971 undercommand Captain Maqsood Jamal. The new battery was not issued any guns thus the existing guns within the regiment and other equipment were divided judiciously among the four batteries. The commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel A.R. Sheikh was appointed as the artillery controller at SOC and 2IC Major Haq Nawaz Niazi was also detached from the regiment, he was tasked to perform the duty of AADC at Mianwali. The battery commanders were Major Nasim Hayat (51 LAA), Major Muhammad Suhrab (52 LAA) Major Riaz Ahmed (53 LAA) and Major Muhammad Aslam was commanding 301 LAA Battery. Thus 51 LAA, 301 LAA Batteries & Regiment Headquarters were at Mianwali Air Base.<sup>150</sup>

Three raids came on the very first night lasting till dawn.<sup>151</sup> First raid at Mianwali came at 0210 hours on the night 3/4 December 1971, it was a pair of Hunters who were deterred by the effective Ack Ack fire as such no damage was caused to the base. At 0430 hours another pair of IAF attacked and they dropped bombs outside the Mianwali Base, the third raid at 0540 hours was a single Canberra which attacked from east but failed to hit the base. On the evening of 4<sup>th</sup> December at 1700 hours, pair of Hunter came low from west and

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149 War Diary 13 LAA.

150 52 LAA Battery was at Sargodha and 53 LAA battery was at Sakesar.

151 War Diary 20 LAA.

achieved partial surprise as no early warning was passed regarding their intrusion. Guns did opened up and no damage was caused. The hours of darkness increased the anxiety and suspense of defenders waiting for the attackers, they knew that Indians will be coming and were ready on the guns. Captain Ghulam Mohi Ud Din was manning the Master Command Post (MCP). At 2215 Hours the attack came, guns opened fire and Canberra dropped six bombs of thousand pound each in a straight line extending 150 yards. These bombs were off the mark, one of the bomb felt short of clerical staff living bunker, two clerks Havildar Sarwar and Gunner Ghulam Nabi were hit with splinters and they took last breath on the spot.<sup>152</sup>

At 1400 hours a pair of Hunter managed to reach Mianwali Base undetected, they came at tree top level from northern direction, were able to strafed the oil storage, medical room and before they could reach the parked C-130, one of them was shot and wreckage was collected as war trophy later by the regiment.<sup>153</sup> Same evening at 1838 just after the sunset, a Canberra coming from east was picked, fired and hit, it turned away and fled.

On 6<sup>th</sup> December the attack was made at noon , bombs were dropped but they fell outside the premise of base. The last arid of the war on Mianwali Base was carried on the night 6/7 December at 0240 hours , it came from south-west direction and passed away without any significant damage to equipment.

## **Risalewala**

**43 LAA** under command Lieutenant Colonel Shafaat served at East Pakistan from 1969 and in September 1971 its advance party arrived from Dacca at Risalewala and took over the operational area from 6 LAA which was being sent to East Pakistan as its replacement. On 18<sup>th</sup> October , 160 LAA Battery(43 LAA) was flown out from

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<sup>152</sup> War Diary 20 LAA.

<sup>153</sup> War Diary 20 LAA.

Dacca and it arrived at Risalewala by special military train; they had collected twelve 37mm Twin Barrels guns from 74 LAA at Karachi. On 19<sup>th</sup> November 1971, the RHQ was also flown out from Dacca and in next flight on 20<sup>th</sup> November the 162 LAA Battery was also flown out and arrived at Karachi. The last LAA Battery of this regiment (161 LAA Battery) was thus left at East Pakistan as all movements between the two wings were closed due to Indian incursion in East Pakistan. On 25<sup>th</sup> November 1971 the baggage party of 43 LAA sailed from Chittagong on Hurmuz and reached Karachi on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1971 when the city itself was under attack, They finally managed to reach Risalewala on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1971.

The 43 LAA as such was in position at Risalewala on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1971. Major Mohi Ud Din was the 2IC and also the OC of advance party. On 1<sup>st</sup> December 1971 a new LAA Battery No.302 was raised at Risalewala undercommand Major Arif Hameed. School of AA Artillery was also closed down and Major Hanif Samar was posted to 43 LAA and he joined them a day prior to outbreak of war. On 2<sup>nd</sup> December 162 LAA Battery undercommand Major Hanif Samar was moved to Shorkot , where already 50 LAA Battery (ex 6 LAA) was deployed. It goes to the credit of 43 LAA and its commanding officer that within such a short span of time they not only got themselves trained on the new 37mm Gun but also improved the defences at the base. The scenery at Risalewala was entirely different from the Dacca and East Pakistan, later being green, moist with plenty of rain, enough cover in shape of trees and vegetation and former being dry and void of cover. Moreover the troops over whelming belongs to the West Pakistan and majority of them had been looking forward to a much needed and long awaited leave and rest. In East Pakistan the nature of the duty was internal security which included raids , check-posts and constant fear of being ambushed. Such employment surely takes its toll on the professionalism of all ranks. Lieutenant Colonel Shafaat rose to



the occasion and motivated his undercommand to give their best in coming days; even he was not sure about the fast pace of coming days. He had plans to rotate the soldiers on short leave of a day or so but before he could implement his ideas the war broke out.

On 4 December 1971, Indian Air Force attacked Risalewala constantly from 0415 hours to 0944 hours with Su-7s. Two raids came at wee hours, first at 0415 hours followed by another at 0445 hours. One of the Su-7 was shot down by PAF near Faisalabad railway station. In the morning of 5<sup>th</sup> December 1971, between 0910-0944 hours, the airfield was attacked four times. one Su-7 at 0916 hours was hit by 43 LAA and was seen heading east trailing a smoke blaze. There were no raids on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> December 1971, it allowed the regiment to improved its defences, they raised the gun platforms to fifteen feet above the ground to have a better view and field of fire. The civilian population came to help and with picks and shovels worked alongwith the gunners to raised the gun platforms..

On 7 December, raid came at 0530 hours, guns opened fire at long range and enemy disappeared without releasing the payload. It was repulsed due to heavy fire by LAA guns. On 081420 another aircraft was destroyed by unit's detachment. At noon on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1971, two Su-7s appeared on the horizon at low level, one was destroyed by own ack Ack fire and soon the guns were given Hold fire as own jets appeared and in a dog fight shot down the Su-7.

Last raid of the war, on Risalewala was on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1971, At 1205 hours Air Marshal Rahim Khan landed and as he was taxiing, four SU-7s appeared from north-east at low level, guns were still in Hold Fire position.<sup>154</sup> Havildar Aslam who was manning the gun, realising the gravity of situation, opened fire at the intruders and within a minute the entire sky was covered with gun fire. The Indians did not pressed and banked away.

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<sup>154</sup> War Diary 43 LAA.

## **Shorkot (Rafique)**

Three LAA Batteries namely 50 LAA Battery (6 LAA Regiment) and 162 LAA Battery of 43 LAA Regiment and 264 Light Anti Aircraft Battery (75 LAA Regiment) were deployed at Rafique Air Base. These LAA Batteries were deployed at the base less 162 LAA Battery since September 1971. Shorkot Base was among the most hit in the initial stages of the war, from the night of 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1971 at 2245 hours to 060541 hours it received no less than 28 air raids. 4<sup>th</sup> December 1971 saw no less than eleven raids that initiated at 1019 hours in the day and lasted till 2310 hours. Barring few the majority of raids came in hours of darkness. Ack Ack batteries hit one aircraft in the evening of 4<sup>th</sup> December, Flight Lieutenant Malvinder Singh Grewal was captured.<sup>155</sup> On the 5<sup>th</sup> December air raid at 1347 hours, one leading aircraft was hit, it exploded in midair and crashed near air traffic control tower.<sup>156</sup>

### **45 (SP) LAA Battery.**

Major Mahmoud Anwar Sheikh was the Battery Commander and he received orders on 21 September 1971 to move to Rafiqui Air Base and to defend a radar installation close to the air base. 45 (SP) LAA Battery was part of 19 (SP) LAA Regiment. Captain Noor Ahmed was the BK, Captain Mohammad Rafiq Qureishi was the troop commander with 2/Lt Muhammad Ashraf Saleem joining the battery in concentration area. Battery was in position by the early morning of 22 September 1971. On 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1971 the war broke out and on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1971, Havildar Gunner Niaz Ali Shah proved his mettle, he accurately directed the fire with tremendous volume and resultantly SU-7 came tumbling down; pilot was able to eject. Driver Abdul Qadeer of 45 LAA Battery was the first to apprehend the pilot, who did not offer any resistance, rather

<sup>155</sup> War Diary 75 LAA, War Diary 67 LAA.

<sup>156</sup> War Diary 67 LAA.

he offered his own hanky to Abdul Qadeer to blindfold him; Driver Qadeer did not had any other cloth to do so. The pilot while being escorted was soon picked up by the incoming vehicles of 162 LAA Battery.

On 5th December 1971, Havildar Muhammad Taufiq of 45 LAA Battery was outstanding in bringing down another SU7, the aircraft was hit and it exploded at low height and crashed on the runway, giving no time to its pilot to eject safely. 45 (SP) LAA was decorated with three TJs for its bravery.

Apart from airbases, PAF Radars were also under LAA protection, Pakistan Air Force Radar at Chohr Kana, 260 LAA Battery and 261 LAA Battery was deployed at Jacobabad. 307 LAA Battery was deployed at Tatepur for protection of PAF's mobile Radar.

## **Peshawar**

13 LAA undercommand Lieutenant Colonel Atique Rehman (lieutenant general and chief of army staff in Bangladesh 1986-1990) had four LAA Batteries, two of these batteries (No.14 at Murid and No.33 at Kallar Kahar) were deployed outside Peshawar. Regimental Headquarters, 20 & 300 LAA Batteries were thus defending Peshawar air base. Battery Commanders who took part in the war included Majors Riaz Hussain, M.M.K.Burki, Iftikhar Hussain, Muhammad Razzaq and Muhammad Saeed. Among the Capatins were Nazir Mughul, Nawaz Khan, Ali Asghar, Nihar Baig, Maqsood Mazhar and Razi Haider. Two subalterns were Athar Wadood Chohan and Javed Riaz Ahmed Khan. Subedar Major was Muhammad Ais, Fateh Sher, Muhammad Yousaf, Rasul Khan and Durran Khan were the subedars of the regiment.

Lieutenant Colonel J.R.A.Khan (retired) recalls, *'I had recently joined the regiment, it was deployed at the base, our mess was*

*within a stone throw but we were living under the canvas. Our two batteries were deployed, one each at the end of runway. Guns were on a raised platform to gain more field of fire. Regiment was in a tremendous spirit, at that time there were apprehensions about the Bengali officers and soldiers but my regiment was a living example of brotherhood; credit goes to the commanding officer who had an aura of dignity and devotion’.*

On 4 December 1971, at 0655 hours, Peshawar received the first raid of the war. Two Indian Hunters came for an attack from the southern direction; early warning was given well in time. One major factor was that due to the layout of the ground the low level attack was quite risky. ‘*Myself and Naib Subedar Nabi Baksh were both standing at the 300 LAA Battery which was deployed at the southern end, we heard the early warning siren, then came the Hunters diving from a height and straightening, at that moment our own Sabres were also lined up thus fire order was ‘Hold Fire’ and it was repeated yet Havildar Noor Muhamamd opened fire on the incoming aircraft. It was a timely action rounds of 14.5mm hit one of the Hunter; the raid passed without any damage. Our sabres were able to take off and later they shot down one of the Hunter. After the raid when I inquired from the gunner as why he fired despite the Hold Fire orders, he replied that I thought it is ‘Haur fire’ ( more fire).*’<sup>157</sup>

Again on the same day at 1100 hours, the base received the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the last attack of 1971 war when pair of Indian Hunters again raided the base. One of the Hunters spotted a 40 mm Mark-II belonging to H Troop of 300 Battery, not firing. Infact gun crew at that time were busy in handling technical stoppage of the gun.<sup>158</sup> When the aircraft came for 2<sup>nd</sup> run, Havildar Muhammad Hussain and his detachment (Naik Muhammad Hussain, Gunners Hamid Khan, Shah Jahan

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157 Conversation with Lieutenant Colonel retired J.R.A.Khan

158 War Diary 13 LAA

and Moti ur Rehman) had calmly rectified the fault and were ready to engage the air craft. Although the members of the detachment were wounded due to fire of the aircraft in first run, they continued firing and successfully shot down the attacking hunter, which hit the ground near village Bara. This detachment were awarded Tamgha-e-Jurrat; the only case of an entire detachment being decorated.

## **Kallar Kahar**

Kallar Kahar was the brain of the PAF in the air war, a powerful long range Radar and state of art communication not only detected the aircraft but also passed the early warning to own air bases thus alerting the guns and controlling their fire orders. Two LAA batteries were deployed to protect this Vulnerable Point (VP), 33 LAA Battery (13 LAA) and 53 LAA Battery (20 LAA) were entrusted with this strategic task.

33 Light Anti Aircraft Battery (13 LAA) was deployed under command Captain Maqsood Mazhar (Adjutant). Captain Nazir Mughal later relieved him on 4 December 1971. The Battery was to protect the strategic radar of PAF deployed on top of a hill and well camouflaged. Thus guns were required to be deployed in a manner to counter the likely air attack on the Vulnerable Point (VP). The first challenge was to make the approach to the chosen gun sites on a difficult and steep terrain, Approach road was made ready and it required working around the clock with pick and shovels, later guns were pulled manually by the troops with ropes.

On 6<sup>th</sup> December 71, two Indian Hunters raided the Vulnerable Point but before they could deliver their weapons, were engaged by the Light Anti Aircraft guns. Again on 9 December 1971, pair of Hunter approached the radar and were instantly engaged by the 37mm Guns. One Hunter was hit, it crashed across village Bhochhal Kalan, some three miles away from the V P. Havildar Falak Sher

and Lance Naik Ali Shan both from 53/20 LAA gave good display of firing.

## **Epilogue**

The performance of 3 Independent Anti Aircraft Brigade was upto the mark and can be best adjudged with the remarks of the Pakistan Air Force's chief .

*'I am very happy and pleased to place on record the fire performance of Anti Aircraft gunners during our hostilities with India. They have taught the enemy to have a healthy respect for their professional skill and courage. Because of the excellent shooting of our Anti Aircraft gunners, Pakistan Airforce Base remained virtually undamaged, enabling us to give the maximum support to the Army. The gunners have a large number of aircraft to their credit and have thus contributed substantially to the achievement of Pakistan Airforce task . We are proud to have Anti Aircraft gunners with us and looking forward to meet the enemy again with confidence. Please convey my appreciation to the commander and all ranks of 3 Antiaircraft Brigade Group'.*

**(Air Marshal A. Rahim Khan, HJ )**

## **Anti Aircraft in support of Field Formations**

Pakistan Army's Strategy in Western Theatre during 1971 War according to Lieutenant General Gul Hassan contained two ingredients; 'First, formations other than those in reserve were to launch limited offensives, secondly a major counter offensive was to be launched concurrently in to India.' The first ingredient of launching limited offensive by I Corps went as per plan in Northern Punjab; however the master stroke of counter offensive by own II Corps including armoured division from south never materialized.

Pakistan's military had grown in size since the 1965 War, new infantry divisions and corps headquarters were raised, same holds true for PAF as it inducted Mirages from France and as such new air bases were activated.

There were three Corps LAA Regiments to provide AA protection to the field formations, namely 29 LAA in support of I Corps, 36 LAA in support of IV Corps, and 75 LAA in support of II Corps. 67 LAA and 19 (SP) LAA were part of the two armoured divisions. Among them only 19 (SP) LAA was truly self-propelled, 67 LAA although an integral part of 6 Armoured Division yet it had only one self-propelled battery ( 48 SP LAA Battery) which was transferred from 19 (SP) LAA. All these regiments were equipped with 40mm Bofors and .50 Quad guns. A week prior to the actual war, postings took place among the AA Regiments, Captain Muhammad Hussain was posted from 29 LAA to 74 LAA and Major Khawaja Ahsan Ullah was posted from 82 LAA Battery on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1971. Lieutenant Colonel Faiz Brandon took command of the regiment on the eve of the war (30<sup>th</sup> November). He had joined back from Air Observation Corps. 67 LAA also faced situation, Major Bashir Ahmed Dhariwal was posted from 58 LAA in the last week of November 1971. Another grey area was the employment of AA regiment in aid of civil power, 112 LAA Battery of 67 LAA was at Lyallpur performing Martial Law duties when it was hurriedly recalled in first week of October 1971 to Kharian and moved within a day to be deployed operationally at Sialkot.

The pattern of the conduct of the 1971 War was quite identical to 1965 War , as far as AA Regiments are concerned. 29 LAA was supporting the I Corps whereas 36 LAA similar to 1965 War was defending the bridges and syphons. The similarity does not extend to 19 (SP) LAA which in the 1971 War saw no action at all. This regiment as in 1965 War was an integral part of 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured

Division and the armoured division for reasons better known to the planners never went into the operations during 1971 War.

All AA Regiments were in operational areas by second week of November 1971, Batteries were detached from these Corps LAA regiments to supplement the anti aircraft defences of the air bases and mobile Radars, thus these Corps LAA units were understrength in the field.

### **Operation Dajla- 1971**

On 18-19 October 1971, **29 LAA** moved from Jhelum to the concentration area which was on Gujranwala- Pasrur Road; after a week the regiment occupied forward concentration area which was close to village Naukrian. 29 LAA was undercommand Artillery 1 Corps The main tasks of the regiment was to provide anti aircraft protection to the artillery regiments which included 33 Heavy, 57 Field, 61 (SP) Field, 72 Medium Regiments and a battery ex 12 Medium Regiment.

67 LAA which was stationed at Kharian having 48 (SP) LAA, 112 LAA, 133 LAA and 309 LAA Batteries as integral part, Lieutenant Colonel Choudhry Iqbal was the commanding officer; he had taken over in September 1971. The regiment was undercommand, 6 Armoured Division Artillery. On 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1971, it received orders to move one battery to Murid air base thus 133 LAA Battery was moved by road to Murid. On 2<sup>nd</sup> November, it had to move another battery (112 LAA) to Sialkot where it was placed undercommand 8 Infantry division. Same day, 309 LAA Battery was also moved to Gujranwala for protection of railway station. State of Emergency was declared in the country at 1200 hours on 24<sup>th</sup> November 1971 and final movement of regiments and formations took place. 6 Armoured Division move out to area Rahwali – Gujranwala; so did



the 67 LAA as it was deployed on Mile stone No. 5 on Gujranwala – Sheikupura Road. The lone SP LAA Battery was deployed at Rahwali railway station.

At 0800 hours 1<sup>st</sup> December 1971, the 29 LAA was placed undercommand Artillery 6 Armoured Division, a battery (112 LAA) from **67 LAA** was also placed under command; this battery (112 LAA) comprised of 40 mm Bofors and lacked track mobility. To make the matter more complicated, two LAA Batteries (110 and 305 ) of 29 LAA were detached. 110 LAA battery was deployed at Risalewala and 305 LAA Battery was deployed for the protection of Jhelum Bridges. 29 LAA had. 50 Quad and 40mm Bofors as the main anti aircraft guns.

**Operation Dajla** was the codename for the capture of Dharam Enclave. The H-Hour was planned at 2130 on the 03 December 1971 with preparatory artillery bombardment lasting for twenty minutes from 2110 hours. No less than 100 artillery guns of medium and heavy calibre were task to hit the enemy positions. Lone AA regiment, 29 LAA was to provide the anti aircraft protection to these artillery regiments in all phases of this operations. Dajla Operation had one aim, to capture the Dharam Enclave, which is close to Narowal in Punjab. It was a known fact that Indians will do their utmost to thwart this operation and extensive employment of airpower was most likely.

8 Infantry Division was main spearhead of our attack supported by integral and artillery of 6 Armoured Division which included 57 Field, 61 (SP) Field, 72 Medium, 1 (SP) Field, 44 (SP) Field and a battery of 12 Medium. Lieutenant Colonel Brandon plan was to have 109 LAA battery to provide cover to 1 (SP) and 44 (SP). 111 Battery to provide anti aircraft cover to 72 Medium and 112 Battery to provide protection from air attacks to 32 Medium and also to 61 (SP).

Certain readjustments were carried out till the last hour in which a troop (one .50 Quad and one 40 mm guns) undercommand Lieutenant Khalid Mehmood were detach from 109 Battery and were placed in support of 57 Field Regiment. The artillery regiments had their own integral anti aircraft machine guns as well, thus an overall anti aircraft plan was envisaged by the Lieutenant Colonel Brandon. LAA Batteries were further split into troops and these troops were deployed around the artillery regiments, in certain cases even troops were further dispersed.<sup>159</sup>

At 2110 hours own guns started shelling enemy positions and as per plan at 2130 hours own troops leaped forward. There was no reaction from enemy air force.

First air attack came at 0730 hours 4 December 1971, when 33 Heavy came under aerial strafing and bombing,<sup>160</sup> second attack came at 0915 hours also on same regiment location, resultantly one troop from 111 Battery was sent in as reinforcement. At 1445 hours, 72 Medium and 61 (SP) under protection 109 LAA Battery came under attack from two SU-7 aircraft 'no damage caused to both sides'.

On night 4/5<sup>th</sup> December, own artillery regiments came under a massive Indian air attack in which they were attacked no less than five times in a short span; own artillery regiments changed their location. 111 LAA Battery kept on firing intermittent barrage of fire. The first air attack came at 0800 hours, two SU-7 attacked 32 Medium location and at 0845 hours another pair of SU-7s attacked 61 (SP) location followed by another pair of same type attacking at 1000 hours on 57 Field location. In between the air attacks on the own artillery regiments, a goods train at Narowal railway station was also hit by the enemy without causing any considerable damage.

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<sup>159</sup> War Diary 29 LAA, entry for 4<sup>th</sup> December 1971.

<sup>160</sup> War Diary 29 LAA

The battle was fluid, commanding officer 29 LAA would attend the commander's conference at 0700 hours and later would have his own briefing attended by all battery commanders to give them an update on operations. It may be noted that one battery (110 LAA Battery) of 29 LAA was at Rislewala for anti aircraft protection. One Mujahid Battery was at Mangla which was also undercommand 29 LAA, this battery was being commanded by Lieutenant Jalil Rehman. By evening 5<sup>th</sup> December 1971, Operation Dajla was completed, own troops had achieved their aim of capturing the Dharam Enclave. 29 LAA, provided anti aircraft cover to the artillery regiments, and although these regiments were repeatedly attacked by the Indian Air Force, yet the fact that own guns kept roaring is a testimony, that anti aircraft was able to deter the enemy aircraft.

## **Zafarwal**

In the aftermath of Dharam capture, the Indian main offensive was launched in the Sialkot –Shakargarh sector by their 1 and II Corps. At dusk on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1971, India's I Corps having three infantry divisions supported by two independent armoured brigades was detected in making a thrust towards the Zafarwal – Shakargarh. Own I Corps with three infantry divisions, one armoured division along with one independent armoured brigade was deployed in the area stretching from Gujranwala to Sialkot. 67 LAA and 29 LAA were the only anti aircraft regiments in the theatre. Both regiments had been dispersed with their batteries being detached to defend air bases.

67 LAA being an integral part of 6 Armoured Division was depleted, as its one battery (133 LAA) was at Murid air base, (112 LAA) was undercommand 29 LAA and on 5<sup>th</sup> December, 309 LAA battery was also moved out for protection of PAF radar at Joinwala; thus the lone 48 (SP) LAA Battery was providing defence to the

headquarters of the armoured division.’ 061500 hours, 48 SP LAA Battery move to divisional administration area’.<sup>161</sup>

On the evening of 5<sup>th</sup> December 1971, one battery (109 LAA) was placed undercommand 8 Armoured Brigade. At dawn, 6<sup>th</sup> December, the Indian air raids started, at 0700 hours, they attacked Narowal, where guns of 112 LAA Battery (67 LAA) shot down one aircraft, pilot was arrested by an observer of 61 (SP) Field Regiment in Square 1869’.<sup>162</sup> Havildar Sabir Hussain who was the No.1 of the 40mm Bofors is credited with shooting down of the aircraft.<sup>163</sup> Meanwhile own armoured brigade also came under air attack, ‘at 0730 hours, two Su-7 attacked the positions and were engaged by 109 LAA Battery, one Su-7 was hit and pilot bailed out and was arrested by 8 Armoured Brigade’.<sup>164</sup>

For next three days (6-9 December 1971) an intense ground battle was fought, supported by air force of both countries, air was infested with aircraft and as such it was difficult to identify friend and foe. Havildar Murtaza Khan of 112 LAA Battery had hits of. 50 Quad on the low attacking SU-7 near Narowal at 060604 hours.<sup>165</sup> These .50 Quad were very effective against the low level attacks, as they had more rapid firepower. An aircraft is seldom destroyed by a single round or shell, it is always the bursts of rounds which cause the destruction. As the Indians were coming low, thus the slow rate of fire by 40mm Bofors was not very effective, the layout of the ground with trees of all height scattered made the early warning and detection of an intruding aircraft quite difficult. Again, on 8<sup>th</sup> December at 0930 hours another. 50 Quad hit an Indian MIG-21. ‘Havildar Manzoor Hussain of 112 LAA Battery destroyed a MIG-21’.<sup>166</sup>

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161 War Diary 67 LAA.

162 War Diary 29 LAA.

163 War Diary 67 LAA.

164 War Diary 29 LAA.

165 War Diary 67 LAA.

166 War Diary 67 LAA.

Unfortunately the lone set with Signals Corps for communication with the SOC was lost due to a road accident at 0400 hours on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1971, consequentially Lieutenant Farooqi who was in 109 LAA Battery had to leave for SOC to act as liaison officer. Later communication was established on GRR-5 Set with SOC, although Lieutenant Farooqi had to make a dash back and forth from Sakesar to Bhagnian (RHQ of 29 LAA) to collect the operational maps.

67 LAA was also responsible for the defence of Lala Musa railway station where 124 AA Mujahid Company was deployed. During this phase of battle, 67 LAA was ordered to reinforce the defences at Lala Musa by taking out two 40mm Bofors from 112 LAA Battery at Narowal. Resultantly two guns were moved out at 081930 hours from Narowal and they reached Lala Musa by 090600 hours. Incidentally, same very guns were moved back to Narowal on 141530 hours and they reached there by mid night.

On 9<sup>th</sup> December 1971, one IAF's Su-7 was shot down by F Troop of 111 LAA Battery. Indians were targeting the own artillery regiments , they were coming low, thus difficult to detect and giving marginal reaction time to AA gunners. Havildar Muhammad Aslam, Havildar Sajawal Khan and Havildar Mehr Khan acting as gun commanders, were protecting the 33 Heavy Regiment which apparently was the main target of Indian air force. 'Six Su-7 attacked 33 Heavy Regiment and were engaged effectively, one Su-7 was shot down'.<sup>167</sup>

Anti Aircraft defence does not imply that every time an enemy aircraft will appear on the horizon; it will be shot down, this defy military statistics. As in case of infantry fire, despite firing thousands of rounds on an enemy post , it still cannot claim that all enemy troops have been killed . In case of Operation Dajla over 100 own field artillery guns carried out preparatory bombardment

<sup>167</sup> War Diary 29 LAA.

for twenty minutes and yet there were enemy troops and equipment which survived it. Thus the Anti Aircraft fire as in this scenario was effective in deterring the enemy aircraft from making any bold manoeuvre. On 14<sup>th</sup> December 1971 , two IAF aircraft, one MIG-21 and other Su-7 were reportedly damaged due to fire of 109 LAA Battery supporting the armoured brigade.

As the battle intensified and reached its climax, the confused state of affairs as far as the 48 SP LAA battery is concerned also reached its apex. It kept on shuffling between Eminabad railway station and Gujranwala, unfortunately the battery did not took part in the epic tank battle despite being the only self propelled anti aircraft element in the theatre. On 16<sup>th</sup> December 1971, RHQ of 67 LAA finally moved ahead to Qila Soba Singh and 48 SP LAA Battery was scatteredly deployed on the three bridges over the Marala Ravi Link canal.<sup>168</sup> Three .50 Quad Guns at Gujranwala-Pasrur , four .50 Quad at Sialkot- Gujranwala road and six 40mm Bofors were for the protection of own artillery deployed around Qila Soba Singh.

On 17<sup>th</sup> December 1971, hours before the ceasefire two Indian aircraft were damaged by 111 LAA Battery.<sup>169</sup>

### **Sulemanki -75 LAA ‘ Battle Honour - Sabuna’**

75 LAA ‘Katiba Mujahid’ had arrived back in Pakistan from Jordan in April 1971 and was designated as such. Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Basit, organisationally it was an East Pakistan Regiment, thus 58 Bengali soldiers from 19 (SP) LAA were posted in. Katiba Mujahid had three LAA Batteries numbering 264, 265 and 266, in September 1971 a fourth battery 307 LAA was raised. Each LAA battery had nine 37mm Guns and three 14.5mm Guns. In June 1971 it arrived at Multan and was placed

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<sup>168</sup> War Diary 67 LAA.

<sup>169</sup> War Diary 29 LAA.

undercommand II Corps Artillery. In September 1971, two LAA Batteries were detached, 264 LAA Battery undercommand Major Muzzafar Khan was deployed at Rafique air base and 307 LAA Battery was made responsible for the defence of PAF radar at Tatepur near Multan.

On 15<sup>th</sup> November 1971, 75 LAA received the warning orders, 266 LAA Battery moved out for the protection of bridges at Bahawalpur and Islam Headworks. 265 LAA Battery commanded by Major Sunawar Khan and the RHQ arrived at Sulemanki Headworks. Mission of 75 LAA was to protect the own artillery regiments including 30 Heavy and a battery of 34 Heavy Artillery regiments, providing artillery fire for own infantry attack. Sulemanki Headworks over River Sutlej are strategic in nature. Own 105 Infantry Brigade had the aim to capture the high grounds around Sabuna including Gurmukh Khera and Beriwalla in order to protect own positions, Sulemanki and Sabuna .

215 Anti Aircraft Mujahid Company, (Later became 372 Light Air Defence Battery) was also deployed for protection of Sulemanki Headworks since September 1971, under the able command of Captain David Vincent Williams (later adjutant of the 102 LAA Regiment). At 1800 Hours 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1971, the attack was launched by 6 Frontier Force and Major Shabir Sharif's company captured the objective. Indians launched counter attack.

The first Indian air attack came at 041643 hours comprising of Hunters. It lasted for well over half an hour. ‘ It was unique and contrary to teachings and expectations as enemy aircraft remained in air for so long, they made nine passes, one Hunter was hit and seen leaving the battlefield with smoke trailing. The credit for such excellent shooting goes to D-3 and Havildar Muhammad Amir

Khan'.<sup>170</sup> Indians resorted to dusk and nocturnal bombing, first attack came at 1800 hours just as the light had faded in the winter and fog had started. Second attack came at 1925 hours; Umbrella Barrage was resorted as the best means of defence by the anti aircraft gunners.

On 5<sup>th</sup> December , Indians first Indian air raid came at noon, two Hunters and pair of MIG -21 came streaking at low level. 'all guns carried out excellent shooting'. Resultantly one MIG -21 was shot down,<sup>171</sup> the aircraft crashed couple of miles away on home bank. Pilot was captured, he was Flight Lieutenant Harish Singh (IAF No. AF-10097) being part of 29 Hindon Station. He had a picture of his wife in his wallet, rupees 100 (Indian rupees), surprisingly he was not wearing any wrist watch and neither he had any pistol.<sup>172</sup> He was handed over to the II Corps, Military Police. Another air arid acme almost an hour later, and again one MIG-21 was shot down, it crashed near Renala Khurd and pilot died inside the cockpit.<sup>173</sup>

Major Sunawar Khan, Lieutenant Muhammad Yousaf, Havildar Sarsa Khan, Havildar Amir Khan, Lance Naik Muhammad Yasin and Gunner Nawab Din were all appreciated and lifted on shoulders by the own troops of both 75 LAA and Frontier Force. The hitting of an enemy aircraft have a magical effect and impact on the morale of troops; it seems so natural that during ack ack fire even the other arms soldiers simply starts looking at the sky. Air duel between the enemy pilot and own ack ack gunners is short and swift and result obvious to all thus it is eye catching and heart-warming. Opposite was the result on the Indians who saw with their own eyes in front of them their own aircraft going down in flames. Anti-Aircraft Artillery thus is a necessary element of any battle as it keeps the morale of own troops and own population high.

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170 War Diary 75 LAA.

171 War Diary 75 LAA.

172 War Diary 75 LAA.

173 War Diary 75 LAA.



On 6<sup>th</sup> December at dawn IAF struck but without any meaningful damage, however in return one of its MIG-21 was damaged by own Bofors. 7<sup>th</sup> December was a busy day as IAF raided no less than seven times in the area carrying out strafing, rocketing and bombing. Havildar Sher Muhamamd's 14.5mm Gun detachment including Gunner Muhammad Arif and Gunner Muhammad Yasin were applauded by all for accurate shooting, the gun detachment did damaged two MIG-21.

IAF did continued its support for the ground troops but it had lost its steam after suffering heavily in this sector. As the moon was full thus the visibility was ideal at night for bombing. On 9<sup>th</sup> December there was only one raid by IAF, on 10<sup>th</sup> December there was none during day however at night flares were dropped over the FDLs. Corps Headquarters warned all the undercommand units regarding the possibility of an Indian Heliborne or paratroops in the area thus there was an extra vigilance among troops and even higher among the civilian population.

On 11<sup>th</sup> December 1971 there was only air attack at dusk however on 13<sup>th</sup> December there were three such air raids ; all were effectively countered through a well coordinated and timely burst from 37 mm and 14.5 mm guns. By this time of war, the gunners had become proficient in handling the guns; majority of them had never fired these Chinese guns before the war.

On 13<sup>th</sup> December at 1600 Hours the IAF was again overhead the area, Havildar Muhammad Bashir and his detachment including Naik Abdul Rehman, Gunner Mehmood Ahmad and Gunner Muhammad Khan effectively destroyed a Mystere aircraft, it exploded in the air. Later during wreckage the dead body of Flight lieutenant J.Kumar was identified.

On 14<sup>th</sup> December, a troop of 37mm and 14.5mm was detached and deployed at Tibbi Lal boat bridge at Bahawalnagar, it was obvious that own strike corps was now contemplating regarding the offensive. Very next day the boat bridge was attacked by Indian aircraft , own troop now reinforced with the other troops fired back and compelled the intruding jets to vacate the air space.

On 16<sup>th</sup> December 1971, the RHQ and remaining elements moved out from Sulemanki and concentrated at Arifwala for next orders when they received the signal of cease fire. Katiba Mujahid finally moved back to its peace location Multan when on 28<sup>th</sup> January 1973 at 0700 hours its heavy luggage party left operational area.

### **36 LAA**

36 LAA was at Karachi since July 1970, performing the Martial Law Duties. In July 1971 Lieutenant Colonel Ghulam Sarwar Kakkar took over the command and soon regiment received its orders to move to Lahore. 36 LAA in post 1965 War had undergone a transition , it had to part way with 133 LAA 'Q' Battery to newly raised 67 LAA; everyone in the regiment missed the Q Battery. A new LAA Battery was thus raised within the regiment to cover the deficiency, it was named as 306 LAA Battery. In 1969, all twelve officers from Pakistan Military Academy posted to AA Artillery were first posted to 36 LAA and after six months were posted to other AA Regiments; that speaks itself about the regiment.

By first week of November 1971, the 36 LAA had been deployed, its 306 LAA battery was in support of two field artillery regiments (73 Medium, 28 Medium).132 LAA 'P' Battery was deployed at Walton to provide anti aircraft protection to the PAF Radar. 134 LAA newly formed Q Battery, undercommand Major Abid Hussain was deployed for protection of Ravi Syphon, however four 40 mm

Bofors were taken out to reinforce the 135 LAA Battery at Shahdara protecting bridges on River Ravi; RHQ was also established at Shahdara, manned by Captain Mujtaba Hussain (later major general) as adjutant and Major Ijaz Hussain as 2IC.

As the war broke out on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1971, the fluid situation of war necessitated constant adjustments in the deployment of the AA guns. In between the two wars, new bridges were constructed on the River Jhelum, River Chenab and River Ravi. Indians made three attempts on bridges over Ravi but were repulsed with an aggressive aerial shooting. Attacking a bridge requires certain preconditions, foremost being the availability of time to fly over the length of the bridge and dropping bombs or else to bomb it from an higher altitude; both options were denied by own AA Gunners to IAF.

As the War expanded the importance of even small bridges over canals emerged as serious impediment to any own advance, thus 306 LAA battery deployed in support of field artillery was split in sections. Raiwind Railway Station, Raja Jung Bridge, Lulliani Bridge, Ganda Singh Bridge, Bedian Bridge, and Hudiera Bridge were all now under Ack Ack protection. Similarly 132 LAA Battery was taken out from Walton and deployed on Chenab Bridges.

It was duly realised by the headquarters at all levels that proper attention has not been paid to the static air defence of railway stations, bridges and ordnance depots. A good tested scheme in the shape of Mujahid Companies was on ground, yet these Mujahids were not given due importance which now becomes obvious. Anti Aircraft is much more effective in mass firing rather than the accuracy, for the reason that accuracy cannot be measured accurately in anti aircraft. Indians did target one key strategic fertilizer installation of Pakistan; Mari Gas Fields at Daharki. These gas fields second largest in Pakistan after Sui were discovered in 1957 and in 1964 Exxon an

American company announced and later made operational in 1967 the largest fertilizer plant in Asia. The Exxon plant was attacked on the evening of 4 December 1971, Hunters dropped few bombs which killed two employees of Exxon at Daharki. This incident highlights the importance of Mujahid anti-aircraft companies for such installations thus releasing regular AA Regiments to support the field formations.

### **The Last Ship from East Pakistan**

In April 1971, all families of military persons were flown out of Dacca, still many preferred to live. In October 1971, the changeover between 43 LAA and 6 LAA took place. It was directed that one battery at a time would be flown to Dacca and reciprocating one battery of 43 LAA would be flown back to West Pakistan. In the meantime, it was also finally agreed that 37mm Gun requires one more gunner as compared to 40mm Gun, reason being the range finder in 37 mm which was lacking in 40mm. Thus the LAA Regiments were authorised four batteries as compared to three batteries in the past. A new 302 LAA Battery was thus raised for 43 LAA but it was still on paper. On 18 November 1971, when the last flight of PIA took off from Dacca, the 6 LAA had arrived with its two LAA Batteries and still had 50 LAA Battery in Karachi and 43 LAA had its 161 LAA Battery at Dacca; both batteries were thus placed under operational command of respective regiments.

Major Arif Hameed, the designated battery commander of 302 LAA, had volunteered to act as the officer commanding of 43 LAA rear party and to bring back the luggage. The luggage included the much important mobile low level radar of PAF which was deployed at Dacca and it was decided in last week of November that it is much more important in West Pakistan than at Dacca. Also few engines of Sabres were also to be transported back. This luggage was the main cargo and reason of last ship sailing from East Pakistan.

Major Arif Hameed narrates ‘The delay in our sailing back was due to the ever changing situation regarding this PAF equipment, we had lost two Sabres on 18 November, now there were six spare engines of Sabres which had to be transported back along with the low level radar; finally on 21 November 1971, it was given a go ahead. I was informed by the Eastern Command Headquarters about the luggage. We moved out from Dacca airport with the escort of 6 LAA, Lieutenant Atta was the commander of 6 LAA troops. Our first destination was Naryan Ganj 22 miles out of Dacca from where we had to take two steamers. It was a river port, and these steamers were to take us to Chittagong from where we had to load the luggage on another ship and then to sail to Karachi.

The two steamers were loaded with luggage, Subedar Major Akbar SJ was also with me so was Havildar Jaffar Shah. It took us two days to reach Chandpur, it must be noted that these steamers do not ply during night thus we sailed only during day light. It was Ramadan, and we would break our fast with the fresh water prawns; they are large enough for one man. After three more days of sailing in which we crossed into the sea, we finally reached Chittagong Port. It was Eid Day, which we spent with the troops of our LAA at Chittagong; Captain Anwar was the Battery Commander.

The ship on which we had to sail back to Karachi was owned by East and West Shipping Company, Captain of the ship was infact brother of Indian Cricketer Farouk Engineer, its operation officer was a British and both were reluctant to sail. At Chittagong the embarkation officer handed me 200 hardened criminals which were arrested in last one year and now it was feared that they may break the jail thus they were to be shifted to Karachi. I had no option but to accept them.

It was 1 of December 1971, when we finally sailed after making a detail plan, we change the name of ship into a Chinese jargon. We

first sailed towards Andaman Islands and then change course on the sea route coming from Australia. As per the customs of the sea, the ships flicked their lights indicating their name in Morse Code; our Chinese jargon was quite useful.

We took nine days to reach Colombo, where we had to refuel due to our long route. At Colombo the seaport layout is such that a ship is refuelled at the outer perimeter. Our Naval Attaché was very helpful; I had taken a small boat to reach the port from ship. Between Colombo and Karachi we were chased by an Indian Boat but for unknown reasons it never attacked us. On 12 December 1971, we entered Karachi Harbour and at same instant an Indian air attack came, it killed a worker on the dockyard in front of my eyes, the oil storage tanks were also blazing. We unloaded our cargo, handed over the criminals and then took the train with our two 12.7mm Guns to reach our regiment 43 LAA at Risalewala. It took us another two days to reach Faisalabad, during which we faced an air attack too. Major Adeeb Anwar of 31 PMA Long Course a Sword of Honour embraced martyrdom in another train which was also passing by and halted at Khairpur Railway Station. We as a drill whenever had to halt would always deployed our 12.7mm Guns at the railway stations; it at least raised the morale of the population. We finally reached Faisalabad on 14th December 1971, it was noon and by evening we were deployed with our regiment.'

## **Epilogue**

The ceasefire announcement of President General Yahya Khan came as a surprise to majority of the officers, to them irrespective of the events in East Pakistan the military situation in west Pakistan was now ripe after lasting for two weeks to give Indians a punch in the nose. They were absolutely right in their thinking, the ground facts supports their point of view. The armoured divisions were yet to be launched in Sialkot and Sulemanki areas.

General Ehsan ul Haq (retired) was the adjutant of 19 (SP) LAA supporting the armoured division 'Mailed Fist'. *'We were deployed on a wide axis astride road and railways from Sahiwal –Khanewal, we had a wireless silence thus no news from any other sector. We had trained hard prior to the war and as such were eager to join the battle. The operational strategy which I understood at that time was similar to the 1965 War. Our strike formation II Corps was to make a thrust towards the Amritsar and that was very much possible and had been demonstrated by Germans in WWII and most recently by Israelis in 1967 War that an armoured formation must have an objective as far as 200 miles. Amritsar was hardly fifty odd miles, however our advance was supposed to be through Batinda which makes it bit more longer. Days passed on and there was no orders for the advance thus it became more of a mental irritation, troops and officers were getting restless, they wanted to roll on and every hour was soon breeding rumours of all kind. Our (SP)AA Batteries were dispersed and it was quite an exercise to remain in touch with them. We shifted our location few times mainly at night. Our orders for opening fire on IAF aircraft were also vague, on one hand we wanted to keep the secrecy of our location intact thus it was left to the Battery Commanders to decide. Finally on the night of 14<sup>th</sup> December 1971 we finally received the orders, I personally received the telephone call on field line to move. All night and next night there was massive movement of own vehicles, roads were choked, bottlenecks emerged and it lasted for well over a day. When it all settled down, to our surprise we received the orders of cease fire.'*

*Lieutenant General Tikka Khan, Commander II Corps came to address the officers and he was blunt to admit that, formation has been held in rear for too long and too far. He also highlighted that no less than 200 road accidents took place during one night of move and as such it delayed the crucial hours. It was quite apparent that even he was unaware of the impending cease fire.*

## *Chapter Six*

### **Anti-Aircraft Command 1972 -89**

It was duly realised by the headquarters at all levels that proper attention has not been paid to the static air defence of railway stations, bridges and ordnance depots. A good tested scheme in the shape of Mujahid Companies was on ground, yet these Mujahids were not given due importance which now becomes obvious. Anti-Aircraft is much more effective in mass firing rather than the accuracy, for the reason that accuracy cannot be measured accurately in anti-aircraft. Indians did target one key strategic fertilizer installation of Pakistan; Mari Gas Fields at Daharki. These gas fields, second largest in Pakistan after Sui were discovered in 1957 and in 1964 Exxon an American company announced and later made operational in 1967 the largest fertilizer plant in Asia. The Exxon plant was attacked on the evening of 4 December 1971, Hunters dropped few bombs which killed two employees of Exxon at Daharki. This incident highlights the importance of Mujahid anti-aircraft companies for such installations thus releasing regular AA Regiments to support the field formations.

During the Indo – Pakistan War in December 1971, Pakistan Railways came under attack from the enemy air. Pakistan Railways lived upto its reputation and history of efficiency under war. Its junctions, bridges, fuel storage became strategic assets and were given anti-aircraft protection by the 3 IAAAB.

The importance of a strong anti-aircraft defence for the entire country became obvious even during the 1971 War thus in March 1972 it was principally decided to formalise forty odd Mujahid Anti-Aircraft Batteries spread all over Pakistan with bulk deployed in the north. These Mujahid AA Batteries gave a good performance



during the war. The concept of having local anti-aircraft defence of the area dates back to the WW2 and it was the scarlet thread of the entire British anti-aircraft defences. However in sub-continent it was not practised by the British during Burma campaign therefore on independence it was not adopted by Pakistan also. In 1948, Kashmir campaign the very first AA defence in Kashmir was created by raising 20 mm LAA Battery, a classic and in true sense a Mujahid Battery. In post 1965 War, the concept of Mujahid AA were again created and later augmented in between the 1966-1971.

In the initial and immediate response, a number of Anti-Aircraft (Mujahid) Companies were raised under various formation headquarters and logistics areas. Mujahid (AA) had a simple organisation, one officer from regular army either from AA or field artillery (having served in AA) along with one JCO, one clerk, two havildars and two gunners. They trained the locals who are dedicated, physically fit with zeal to defend homeland. These Mujahid were put through cycles of training, allowing them to have a balance between their military obligation and civil life. They were paid, issued with uniform and free ration for the duration of training and deployment. These Mujahid AA Batteries were also practised in AA firing at Muzaffargarh, Karachi and Nowshehra ranges. Mujahid Batteries were equipped with Chinese and Bofors guns and machine guns.

GHQ decided to group these 40 Mujahid batteries under a headquarters thus boosting the potency of anti-aircraft defences of the country. Initial idea was to have AA regiments comprising exclusively of these Mujahids, later it was amended to have a composite regiment having batteries of Mujahid and regular AA Artillery. In April 1972, alone, no less than eight LAA Regiments were raised at Rawalpindi, having nucleus of these Mujahid AA Batteries. After raising of these regimental headquarters a special

military train started its journey from Rawalpindi with these regimental headquarters, train terminated its journey at Karachi, all regimental and brigade headquarters getting debussed at their designated stations.

#### **4 Independent Anti-Aircraft Brigade Group (4IAABG)**

The raising letter was issued on 16 February 1972 and raising of the headquarters was completed on 15 March 1972 at Westridge Rawalpindi. Brigadier Abul Khair Muhammad Shams-ul-Alam, Sitara-e-Bisalat, was posted as the first commander on 23 February 1972. Major Agha Masood Hasan (later, first General Officer Commanding Army Air Defence Command) was the first brigade major, Major Meharban Khan (deputy assistant adjutant & quartermaster general) and Captain Muhammad Masood, as staff officer grade -3 (operations) were the pioneer officers. 4 IAABG was initially deployed at Multan. Later it moved to Mailsi in January 1978 and Lahore in 1979.

**88 LAA Regiment** was raised on 17 December 1971 at Jamrud Fort with 4 x Light Anti Aircraft Batteries and Regimental Headquarters Troops under Headquarters PTC-3124 Lieutenant Colonel Taslim Begg Chughtai, Artillery was posted as first commanding officer of the Regiment. In 1972, 2/Lieutenant Iftikhar Hasan Siddiqi and 2/Lieutenant Tanvir Talat joined the unit from Pakistan Military Academy and became 1st Parent Officers of the unit. Unit was provided manpower i.e. Regular Reservists, re enrolled Junior Commissioned Officers and Soldiers who were very old and it was really a big challenge for its founders to shape it into a unit.

**89 LAA Regiment Artillery** was raised at Sargodha on 12 December 1971 undercommand 3 Independent Anti Aircraft Brigade Group. Lieutenant Colonel Nazir Ahmed (Retired) was

re-employed and took over as the first commanding officer of the unit. On 15 December 1971, PA-4359 Major Bakht Jamal Khattak, PA-6834 Major Munawar Khan, PSS-9183 Captain Mahmood Ul Hassan Bhatti, PA-11067 Captain Amir Afzal Khan and PSS-11744 Lieutenant Faqir Hussain were posted to unit as raising team.

**94 LAA Composite Regiment** was raised by Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Khan on 15 April 1972 at Westridge Rawalpindi, subsequently shifted to Ojhari Camp Rawalpindi in the first week of May 1972. It had 20, 21, 25 and 96 AA Mujahid batteries along with four regular AA Batteries (343, 344, 345 and 346) which were also raised, thus initially regiment had eight AA Batteries

**95 LAA Composite Regiment** Lieutenant Colonel Arshad Ali Hamdani took over as first commanding officer and Captain Amir Afzal Khan as quarter master. Four Mujahid AA companies i.e 92 Mujahid AA Company, 123 Mujahid AA Company, 124 AA Mujahid Company and 125 AA Mujahid Company, deployed in Gujranwala were group together to raise 95 LAA on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1972.

**96 LAA Composite Regiment** was raised by Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Hassan Khan Durrani. Regiment Headquarters were raised on 15 April 1972 at Rawalpindi. Unit moved to Jhelum on 30 April 1972.

**97 LAA Composite Regiment** Initially, three officers were posted from different AA units Lieutenant Colonel Raja Ghulam Muhammad from 62 Field Regiment, Major Muhammad Yousaf - 2IC from 36 LAA Regiment and Captain Habib Ullah Khan Niazi from 67 LAA Regiment. In March 1972, first batch of twenty JCOs / soldiers including Subedar Ghazanfar Ali the 1<sup>st</sup> SM of the unit who reported on promotion from 58 LAA Regiment. In April 1972, GHQ issued the orders for raising of four LAA Batteries. Advance party

under 2IC moved to Lahore Cantonment (Walton) through special military train, and hence, the unit was formally raised at Lahore on 15 April 1972. Sixteen 40 mm Guns and seventeen 12.7 mm AAMG ex Mujahid AA Batteries were the initial weapons inventory with the unit.

**98 LAA Composite Regiment** was raised at Logistics Area Rawalpindi on 15 April 1972. Unit moved to Okara under 4 Anti-Aircraft Brigade on 3 May 1972 and finally moved to its first station Sahiwal on 15 May 1972.

**100 LAA Composite Regiment** was raised by Lieutenant Colonel A.R. Hayat on 11 March 1972 at Rawalpindi and immediately moved to Multan under command 4 Ack Ack Brigade. It was placed in suspended animation on 16 August 1976 and resuscitated at Risalpur on 19 December 1982 under command 3 Ack Ack Brigade.

**101 LAA Composite Regiment** was raised by Lieutenant Colonel Nazir A. K Mirza. Major Muhammad Iqbal was the first Second In Command and Captain Ehtesham-Ul-Haq was the first Adjutant. As manpower of the unit was mostly Mujahids, to familiarize them with 40 mm Guns. The unit has a unique honour that its Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Nazir Ahmed Mirza, discovered Khairpur Tame-Wali range and 101 Composite Light Ack Ack Regiment Artillery was the first army unit, to carry out organize ground shooting at this range in December 1972. Being issued with no gun tows, the guns were moved to ranges towed by tractors borrowed from local farmers. The first operational responsibility assigned to the unit was anti-aircraft defence of Islam Headworks – Samasata Railway Junction, Mailsi Syphon and Panjnad Head Works. In April 1976, the unit was placed in suspended animation.

**102 LAA Composite Regiment** was raised on 16 April 1972 at Westridge Rawalpindi. The raising was done by Major Abdul

Qadir psc, S Bt and Captain Abdul Razaq were the first two officers posted to the unit. Honorary Captain Muhammad Ajaib was the 1<sup>st</sup> Subedar Major of the unit. It had 11, 215, 286 and 287 Mujahid AA Batteries as an integral part. 215 AA Mujahid Company, (Later became 372 Light Air Defence Battery) remained operationally deployed for protection of Sulemanki Headworks in 1971 India-Pakistan war, under the able command of Captain David Vincent Williams (2<sup>nd</sup> Adjutant of the Regiment). This Battery shot down an Indian *Hunter Jet Aircraft* over Sulemanki. To upkeep the spirit and tradition of excellence and valour, the unit adopted the motto of 'THE HUNTERS', as a symbol of dedication. This motto infused an extraordinary sense of resilience and buoyancy amongst all ranks of the unit. Mujahids were converted into regular gunners; these Mujahids were trained by the unit itself in June 1972. All the stores and equipment was already demanded as per Table of Organization and Equipment and same stores were received in July 1972. On 5 December 1972, unit was visited by the Chief of Army Staff General Tikka Khan. In March 1973, the unit was selected as Corps Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Artillery and was placed undercommand 5 Corps.

**103 LAA Composite Regiment** like other regiments was raised at Westridge on 15 April 1972 and move to Clifton (Karachi). On 14 May 1976 it was placed under suspended animation and resuscitated on 23 June 1999.

**104 LAA Composite Regiment** was raised at Westridge Rawalpindi on 19 April 1972. On 20 May 1972, four Anti Aircraft Mujahid Companies were placed under command. Subsequently regular Light Anti Aircraft Artillery Batteries were raised. Regiment was placed under suspended animation on 18 May 1976 at Peshawar. On 19 December 1982, 104 Light Anti Aircraft Artillery Regiment resuscitated under Headquarters Artillery at Mangla.

## **1972-1975 Anti-Aircraft Doctrine and Strategy**

Anti-Aircraft defence differs from land and sea, whereas in both cases the defenders get an advance warning of hours and even days to prepare and readjust itself, air is different, as it does not allow warning time of more than few minutes. Two Arab-Israel wars of 1967 and 1973 amply highlight the devastation and strategic advantage which Israel gained from early strikes on Arab air forces, destroying them on ground. In the 1973 War which was more keenly followed by Pakistan, the threat of Israel Air Force was nullified to a great extent by Surface to Air Missiles (SAMs) of Egyptian and Syrian ground forces. In the aftermath of General Tikka Khan visit to the Middle East in 1974, a reappraisal of own army's anti-aircraft defence was carried out, the meeting was attended by Pakistan Navy and PAF. It was unanimously agreed that PAF itself is the first and major anti-aircraft defence of Pakistan, it was also agreed upon that if PAF fails to have an air supremacy then anti-aircraft guns are the only and last protection. PAF later in 1976 bought its own SAM defence system, Crotale. It is a French origin missile system an ideal for the defence of airbases and vulnerable points. Pakistan Navy did not had its own independent air wing like Royal Navy, it also within a year raised its own Naval Air Wing, however it still lacked a potent anti-aircraft defence for the harbours and ports. The end result was that 3 and 4 AA Brigades have to shoulder the responsibility of strategic installations protection from air raids.

Within the army, it was decided to have an AA Regiment for each infantry division and each corps these recommendations were to a great extent achieved and implemented with raising of ten LAA regiments. It was decided to raise another AA Brigade for the defence of PAF and PN installations in south (Karachi) and also to raise a Headquarters with a major general in command to co-ordinate anti aircraft defence across the country. **45 AA Brigade**

was raised on 14 May 1975 at Sukkur Lines, Malir Cantonment and after three months, shifted to Mirpur Lines. 6 LAA, 29 LAA and 52 HAA were the initial regiments.

### **Raising of Anti-Aircraft Command – 14 April 1975**

On 14 April 1975, Anti-Aircraft Command was raised, it was one of the most monumental decision in the Pakistan's military history; other being raising of Army Aviation Corps in 1976. Both these historic decisions had a long debate behind them dating back to 1930s, both affected Regiment of Artillery; but these were modern and forward looking steps and later events proved the wisdom.

A skeleton anti-aircraft staff had already been in position and the AA Command Headquarters were functioning within General Headquarters premises since March 1975. On 14 April 1975, Commander 3 Independent AA Group, Brigadier Iftikhar Muhammad formally took over the command. After a month, on 15 May 1975, his promotion orders to the rank of Major General were issued. 3 AA, 4 AA and 45 AA Brigades were on the Orbat of HQ AA Command. Major General Iftikhar was originally commissioned in field artillery and joined AA branch in 1951 after doing his gunnery staff from UK and remained on the faculty of Anti-Aircraft School. He remained in command for a year before being posted out to GHQ. It was a peaceful time, with regiments concentrating on their training, annual fire and sports; organisational creases were being ironed out.

### **Raising of Surveillance Control and Reporting Regiments**

The main theme of training and study periods in the post 1971 War was to 'Study problems of LAA Defence of a PAF Base against low altitude air strike and what is the best pattern of deployment for LAA guns'. Reporting of the state of air battle to the gunners

spread over the air base or in support of field formation remained a cardinal factor in any pattern of command and deployment. In both Wars with India the identification of friend and foe, the fire orders for the guns, batteries and the regiments were a convoluted affair. PAF suffered the losses at Mauripur due to this enigmatic system of passing information about the enemy aircraft and more important than that, about own aircraft position. For a better and efficient anti-aircraft defence in the field, it was decided to raise own Surveillance Control and Reporting Regiments, equipped with long and medium range Radars only, responsible for establishing Control and Reporting Command Post (CRCP) and Forward Area Air Defence Centre (FAADC) , links up own data with the PAF and passing on the information as quickly as possible to own AA Guns.

**123 Surveillance Control and Reporting** Regiment was raised on 9 September 1975 at Sargodha under command Lieutenant Colonel Jamil Hasan (brigadier, Commandant SAAA), it had only one 444 SCR Battery, which is now regarded as the oldest such Battery. The SCR Regiment did not had any guns on the inventory thus there strength was kept at 110 men. Lieutenant Colonel Yousaf Saad who was also commanding a similar regiment took over the command in June 1977. **124 SCR** Regiment was raised on the heels of the pioneer regiment on 2 October 1975 at Multan undercommand Lieutenant Colonel Yousaf Saad. **125 SCR** was raised on 9 October 1975 at Malir by Lieutenant Colonel Shafaat, who commanded till December 1978. Raising of SCR Regiments ushered AA into a new dimension, in mid-eighties additional SCR Batteries were raised in every SCR Regiment, thus increasing the manpower and also enhancing the operational capability. These regiments proved their worth in the Afghan War by detecting intruders and passing on the early warning to the AA Batteries and field formations.

**Major General Mahmood Aslam Hayat** took over the command of AA Command in August 1976 and commanded for



well over five years. He was commissioned in 19 LAA in 1950 and after his basic course was among the officers selected to undergo gunnery staff at UK; he was the youngest and junior most officer. He was retained as an instructor at UK for a short time; he later served as instructor in AA School. He commanded 23 Field in East Pakistan in 1969 before being posted to AA School. During 1971 War he was Commandant AA School and as such acted as area commander. He after his promotion commanded 45 AA Brigade at Malir. 57 mm Medium Anti-Aircraft Radar Controlled Guns from China were inducted during his tenure. In 1977, military coup again put the army officers monitoring civilian affairs. Martial Law (1977-1984) duties in south were assigned to AA Command, thus GOC AA became deputy martial law administrator (DMLA) as well. RBS-70 Missiles were put under the firing trials in 1980 and Major General Hayat was in strong favour of having man portable surface to air missiles.

### **57 mm Medium Anti-Aircraft Guns**

Pakistan Army inducted 57mm radar control gun system in 1977-78, in order to bolster its medium air defences. In 1976 team of officers and junior commissioned officers along with gunners were sent to China for training. The gun system comprise of three batteries of eight gun each, regiment having one tactical surveillance radar and each battery having one fire control radar. Each battery can be deployed independently but unlike HAA, it cannot be split into troops. Principally, a regiment should be deployed in totality on an air field, in combination with a LAA regiment.

Major Ehsan (CJCSC) Major Iftikhar (lieutenant general retired) were among the officers selected from AA School alongwith Captain Ilyas (Lt Col) Captain Sarwar (brig) to name few. Own trainees at China were split into groups, each group concentrating on one

specific equipment that includes guns, fire control radar, tactical radar and fire control equipment. Guns were the most difficult but the fact that commander fires the entire battery collectively through a button is a very glorious military moment. Teaching was in English at China, they had translated the Chinese precis into English before our arrival, in the class, and the Chinese interpreters would also be present. China at that era was all in Mao Cap, a green tunic a bicycle. Accommodation was in the form of long barracks with community washrooms, taking bath was an issue for own troops as in China there was no privacy in bathing.

In 1978, HAA (heavy anti-aircraft) Regiments were converted into MAA (medium anti-aircraft) regiments. Apart from the two HAA regiments (41 and 52) few LAA regiments were also transitioned into the new equipment. 58 LAA became 58 MAA on 11 July 1977, equipped with 57mm guns, Type 5 Radar, and FCC Type 59. In February 1979, the last of HAA Regiments (41 HAA) also converted onto new 57mm guns and carried out their first fire at ranges in November 1979. This was the dawn of a new era; the 57mm Gun system is complicated and requires extensive study and practical handling of the MAA Battery. Brigadier Sarwar Jhura (retired, commanded 58 MAA and Commandant SAAD) stands out as a master gunner on this MAA system. The 57mm Gun had the firepower and with a regiment deployed at the airbase the ratio of hitting an intruding aircraft increases manifold. In MAA Regiments the manpower strength was comparatively less than the LAA Regiments; the technical aspects of MAA render it wholly suitable for AA protection of an airbase or a vulnerable area and point. MAA Regiments thus remained confined within the major cantonments in early years; later Afghan War brought forward the inherent lethality of these guns when deployed close to the Western Borders. A MAA Regiment comprised of three MAA Batteries each having eight 57mm Guns, a fire control radar type 4 and a fire

control computer (FCC) Type 59. For local defence each battery have few 12.7mm guns as well. Long range surveillance radar Type 513 with a range of 200 Kilometres was the heart of the regimental early warning defences; each regiment had one such radar. A MAA regiment in Chinese military doctrine relied upon the electric power for its operations, although it can operate manually but it does slow down the laying and firing. In our environment the lack of power outlets at the operational grids was a major headache which every MAA gunner had to undergo. In China, almost every bridge and vital installation had power outlets for these electric operated 57mm Guns.

**Major General Afzal Khan** took over the command of AA Command in December 1981 and handed over to **Major General Agha Masood Hassan** in June 1984. It is worth highlighting that martial law itself was lifted in the country in December 1984 thus commanders and officers at all tiers of command were free from non-professional tasks. Major General Afzal Khan was commissioned in 5 HAA and later commanded the battery at Dacca during 1965 War. This was the period when the Afghan War was reaching its zenith and Stingers made their debut with stunning success to an extent that it brought forward a revolution in anti-aircraft warfare. Siachen Conflict was maturing and demanding an extraordinary approach from AA Command to cut off the aerial supply routes of Indian forces at the glacier. Two key international events had deep impact on the anti-aircraft doctrine of Pakistan. On 7 June 1981, Israeli air force struck at Iraq's nuclear reactor near Baghdad '*Two minutes over Baghdad*', it highlighted the vulnerability of a nation without strong air defence. Also in 1979, Russia invaded into neighbouring Afghanistan. In the same breadth, first the Iraq-Iran War started in 1980 followed by Falklands War in 1982; both these especially the later brought forward a paradigm shift in the naval warfare highlighting the importance of anti-aircraft defence .

## Brigade-X

India had carried out a nuclear explosion in 1973 and this offset the strategic balance of power in the sub-continent. Prime Minister Zulfikar Bhutto vowed 'to eat grass but will make an atomic bomb'. In 1977 the first of LAA batteries were deployed around 'K area' or Khan Research Laboratories (KRL). *Two minutes over Baghdad*, all of a sudden brought home the stark reality of a similar raid on own installations as well.

In June, days after Baghdad raid, a new AA **Brigade 'X'** was raised. Colonel Bashir Khattak was the first commander, Major Imad Shah as the BM and Captain Muhammad Riaz was the G-3. Initially two LAA regiments (29 LAA and 36 LAA) and medium anti-aircraft regiment (58 MAA) were deployed along with an infantry battalion and a company of SSG. It was the most heavily defended area in the sub-continent history. Baghdad incident acted as a catalyst, procurement of latest AA guns, missiles and radars were put on fast track and by 1985, first of Giraffe Radar followed by RBS-70 Missile and 35mm Oerlikon guns in 1987-88 were inducted. New regiments comprising exclusively of new equipment were raised 133 Gun Missile, 134 Gun Missile, 135 Gun Missile, were raised immediately in 1987-88. Followed, by another eight such gun missiles regiments before end 1989. All these efforts bore fruit when Pakistan successfully conducted its nuclear explosion in 1999. It is a great contribution to make own country's integrity and sovereignty impregnable. Life of AA officers and troops had its own flair while serving in K area. None knew the exact location of the installations, perhaps brigade commander was in picture but other than him, the deployed regiments had only one aim; to protect the sky. It speaks volume for the professionalism of Ack Ack gunners that despite the skyline being a commercial flight path with air traffic flying around the clock, no incident of civilian air liner being ever hit occurred in last four decades.

Anti-Aircraft Regiments were put on high alert in eighties, first in June 1981 when Baghdad was air raided. Second was in October 1984 when Mrs Indira Gandhi, prime minister of India was assassinated, AA Regiments were move and deployed at air fields, they remained deployed for a month. Last major deployment of the decade came in 1986-87 when India conducted its biggest ever military exercise 'Brass Tacks'. All AA Regiments spent entire winter in the field and at air fields. AA Regiments are always the first one to leave the cantonment and the last one to arrive back; their arrival back is always the final gesture of life returning to normalcy in the country.

### **Shaheen Air Defence Regiments**

The events in Gulf provided Pakistan Army an opportunity to gain valuable experience on the modern military equipment, to full fill its moral and international obligation. In 1980 a nucleus group of two officers and sixteen soldiers from AA Artillery were deputed from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia, soon seven independent LAA Batterys were raised, these were commanded by Major (General retd) Ihsan, Major (Lt Gen retd) Owais, Major (Brigadier retd ) Anwar, Major (Brigadier retd )Zubair and Major (Colonel retd) Ghazanfar. Initially these batteries were stationed at Jeddah where they were trained for eight months on Oerlikon guns and then dispersed all over KSA. Later these batteries trained Saudi troops also. In 1981-82, Saudi Arabia requested Pakistan Army to send a brigade resultantly selected men and officers were sent on secondment to Saudi Arabia. From these officers and men, the host raised a brigade, one of the most modern brigade of its type having armoured, armoured infantry, self-propelled field artillery and a state of art air defence regiment; supported by engineers, supply and transport, ordnance and EME companies and battalions. Major Arif Hassan (Lieutenant General retired) was the brigade major. A selected team of instructors from

SAAA was sent to Saudi Arabia; Major Irfan (Brigadier retired) was among the team. *‘Saudis had inducted a variety of weapons, they had French air defence system which is more commonly known as Crotale but they had modified it for the Saudis and were known as Shaheen. We first attended the classes being run exclusively for us by the French and after six months we started preparing the battle procedures and drills. Meanwhile the officers and men started pouring in thus we ran initial cadres of conversion for them.’*

Lieutenant Colonel Waqar Naveed (Brigadier retired) was the very first commanding officer of this regiment known as Shaheen Air Defence Regiment. *‘We went by civil airline with a bit of secrecy shrouded around us; it was uncalled. At Tabouk, we had a newly built accommodation for the offices, troops living and officers’ quarters. None was allowed to keep the family however families were allowed to stay for three months only. Our gun parks were also upto the mark; we had 35mm Oerlikon Guns and Shaheen Missiles. We put a lot of efforts in attaining the professional standards. Firing was the hallmark of our training, it was also a test of French equipment and much of their future deals depended upon our firing. At the end, we did achieve our objectives and firing was successful. There was not much to do in the isolated desert garrison. We were officially allowed to dispose our issued ration, a day was fixed for the collection of this surplus ration by the contractor. At the end of the secondment, all this extra cash was distributed among the regiments in Pakistan basing upon their strength in the battalion. Professionally it was a great learning for all of us, to operate state of art equipment, manoeuvres of an armoured brigade and supporting it with air defence weapons was a practical training. This latter acted as the base of our growth as an Army Air Defence Corps.’*

## **Modernisation of Anti-Aircraft Command**

Induction of shoulder fired SA missiles was initiated in June 1978 and gained momentum from summer 1981. Delegations from

artillery directorate and Anti-Aircraft Command visited several European countries including Italy, Sweden, France and Switzerland. In the end, Sweden was selected as the main supplier to build a new modern, lethal, state of art, anti-aircraft system. Sweden stands as an icon in anti-aircraft artillery, Pakistan again opted for time tested, reliable Bofors and Oerlikon.

### **Induction of Giraffe**

In October 1985, the very first Giraffe (Ericson) Radar was inducted in Pakistan Army (AA Command). Giraffe with two Swedish instructors was placed at Westridge within HQ AA Command compound. A batch of lieutenants and captains recommended by regiments arrived at Ojhari Camp. Officers included were Captain Salik Nawaz Cheema (later SJ Shaheed), Captain Babar Amin (Brigadier retired), Lieutenant Salim (Major General retired), Captain Amir Yaqoob, Captain Hamid Usman (both Brigadier retired). Ojhari Camp was in same shape as it was in 1951 or before, wooden barracks surrounded by wild growth at the edge of Rawalpindi. Within days it was put into shape, officers were living in tents and daily drove in a truck to Westridge. Major Khateer (Lieutenant General retired) was officer-in-charge of the course, he was daily driving from Wah and never for once he was late. Major General Agha himself would come frequently and impromptu to the Giraffe. After four weeks of training the two man Swedish team left and Giraffe was operated by these officers. Initially the Giraffe was taken to Kahuta, then to Lahore and Sargodha, before settling in Kilo Area. Giraffe is a modern Pulse-Doppler radar which has range of forty odd Kilometres. On 23 March 1986, Giraffe was first displayed at Pakistan Day Parade at Race Course Ground. Captain Rizwan (Brigadier retired) led the AA contingent.

## **Bofors RBS-70, Oerlikon and Sky Guard**

RBS-70 (Ro-Bot System 70) is a man portable air defence system (MANPADS). In early eighties, Pakistan Army decided to induct shoulder fire, small but lethal anti-aircraft missiles, which can be fired quickly in the field with minimum maintenance. RBS-70 is a Swedish origin, laser guided anti-aircraft missile. Oerlikon 35mm Guns are Swiss origin, twin barrel, electrically operated, a world reputed anti-aircraft gun. Sky Guard radar is a fire control radar which provides firing data to the Oerlikon and RBS-70.

The system and doctrine adopted by own AA Command was revolutionary in sub continental military history. It bought and inducted an entire spectrum of anti-aircraft defence. Giraffe, RBS-70, Sky Guard and Oerlikon deployed as an entity was the most modern and lethal low level anti-aircraft defence in the world; it still is. It ushered AA into a new transition, from guns into missiles. The classic warfare and traditional image of a warrior is, to fight alone against the heavy odds and he accomplishes his mission at all cost. Shoulder fired Surface to Air missiles firer represents that classic warrior in modern time. A SAM varies basically in its target acquisition, few like Stinger are heat seeking or fire and forget, the missile locks on to the heat emission from aircraft. The other type rides on the beam of the radar and locks on to the target, the third type is optically guided and tracked. Oerlikon Guns are paired with Sky Guard Radar which acts as acquisition and fire control radar. This increases lethality, accuracy and early response to an intruder.

New Gun and Missiles Regiments were raised, comprising of the soldiers, technicians and officers trained from abroad. As, the nature of equipment demanded higher degree of concentration, and careful handling thus these GM regiments had new table of organisation and equipment (TO&E). Orders for raising were issued in September 1987.



On 25 November 1987 the very first Gun Missile Regiment of Pakistan Army (**133 GM Regiment ‘Sub Tu Pehli’**) was raised, it had three batteries, one equipped with radar controlled guns, other with surface to air missiles and third battery was the maintenance battery. Lieutenant Colonel Khateer Hassan (Lieutenant General retired) was the first commanding officer. It is a matter of honour and a well paid tribute that the very first such regiment was being given birth by none other than the Lieutenant Colonel Khateer, he had served in similar regiment at Saudi Arabia and during his days at Camberly while on staff course he had ample opportunity to study and interact with the modern trends of NATO.

On 28 February 1988, another regiment **134 GM Regiment** was raised, bulk of manpower came from 98 LAA and 43 LAA Regiments. Lieutenant Colonel (Brigadier) Nazir Shams was the founding commanding officer. **135 GM Regiment ‘Falak Shagaf’** was raised at Mangla on 25 November 1987 under command Lieutenant Colonel Fazle e Majid. ***Falak Shagaf*** later participated at the world highest battle Siachen. Aatish Fishan , **136 GM Regiment** was raised on the last day of 1987 at Multan by Lieutenant Colonel Manzoor Hussain (Colonel retired) and SM Abdul Khaliq holds the honour of being the first SM of the regiment. In 1989, first regiment to be raised was **141 Corps Light AA Regiment**; Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Baksh was the first commanding officer. Lieutenant Colonel Baksh had served as instructor at SAAA and had served in MAA and LAA Regiments, his students do remember his brotherly professional attitude along with him smoking ‘Princeton the Big One’.

**142 ‘Karman Wali’ GM** was raised on 7 July 1988 at Ojhari Camp, although the raising process had started in January same year. Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ilyas , who was commanding 58 MAA was posted as the first commanding officer , Major Ashraf Saleem (Lieutenant General retired) was the first second in command

and Captain Rizwan Mahmood was the first adjutant. It is worth highlighting that Captain Hamood Uz Zaman (Lieutenant General) was the first officer to be posted on the strength of Karman Vali from 98 LAA. Lieutenant Colonel Ilyas always had a philosophical and literary aspect of everyday life, he highlighted that since the regiment took birth on the 27 Ramadan thus he named it as Karman Vali. It is also worth highlighting that his son Lieutenant Colonel Osama also commanded the same regiment.

Two more GM Regiments namely 143 GM and 144 GM were raised in 1988, before the transition of Anti-Aircraft into Air Defence. **143 GM** was raised on 1 December 1988 at Mangla under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Imtiaz Ali, it is worth highlighting that Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Owais (Lieutenant General) also commanded this regiment from 1993-1995. The last GM Regiment to be raised as part of Anti-Aircraft Command was **144 GM Regiment**, it was raised on 1 December 1988 by Lieutenant Colonel Asad Ali, and later Lieutenant Colonel Zahid Latif Mirza (Lieutenant General) also commanded this regiment.

### **Farewell to Anti-Aircraft**

On 1 March 1989, Headquarters Anti-Aircraft Artillery was transitioned into Army Air Defence and with this an era came to an end. Major General Agha Masood Hassan the last General Officer Commanding of AA assumed the new command of Army Air Defence. He was the man who had made it possible, despite all the odds to give a distinct identity and entity to the officers and men as Air Defenders.

## *Chapter Seven*

### **Anti-Aircraft at Siachen and in Afghan War**

#### **Russian Invasion of Afghanistan**

Pakistan and Afghanistan despite being neighbour and sharing the same cultural and religious identity seldom have enjoyed peaceful and trustworthy relationship from 1947 to date. Armed clashes between the two militaries took place in 1952 at Chaman. 13 LAA was raised at Peshawar in 1949 mainly to have AA protection for the air field at Peshawar on north-western frontier. In 1964, another AA regiment 20 LAA was stationed first at Kohat and then moved further up north at Thal on Kurram. Defence of Western Borders was entrusted to the Frontier Militia, stretching Chitral Scouts (1903) in the north and descending down to Khyber Rifles (1878), Kurram Militia (1895), North Waziristan Militia (1895), Zhob Militia (1890) and Chagai Militia (1900). Officers from Anti-Aircraft Regiments served in these militias on secondment and in many instances commanded them as well. These militias had no worthwhile anti-aircraft weapons other than light machine guns

In December 1979, Russian forces entered into Afghanistan and the century old hypothesis of Great Game finally became a reality. Pakistan's security was at risk and soon a freedom war started in Afghanistan by Mujahedeen, fighting with outdated weapons against a superpower. Daily thousands of refugees started pouring over the border into our tribal areas. In 1981, Major General Hayat GOC AA Command visited Chitral and other frontier areas to assess the AA defences of own against intruding Afghan aircraft. It was principally decided that **13 LAA** stationed at Peshawar will be responsible for the AA defence. In 1981, few more AA Regiments were raised and deployed at key towns on the western frontier including Chaman

and Landi Kotal. **100 LAA** Regiment which was placed under suspended animation in 1976 was resuscitated at Risalpur on 19 December 1982 under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Abad Gul. **104 LAA** also placed under suspended animation since 1976 at Peshawar, it was resuscitated on 19 December 1982 undercommand Lieutenant Colonel Wamiq Ahmed Khan with Major Riaz Butt as second in command, alongwith Majors Muhammad Baksh and Major Atta Muhammad Awan SJ as the battery commanders and Lieutenant Maqsood Hussain as the adjutant. **126 LAA Regiment** was raised on 15 December 1982 with Lieutenant Colonel Sheikh Rashid Maqsood as the pioneer commanding officer. **127 MAA** was raised at Lahore on 13 February 1983 with Lieutenant Colonel Hidayat Ullah as the first commanding officer and Second Lieutenant Salik Nawaz Cheema as the first officer.

On 30 January 1980, **Katiba Mujahid** reached Quetta and placed under command Headquarters 33 Division. The unit remained deployed on western border till Spring 1982 to prevent air violations from Afghanistan. 265 and 381 LAA Batteries were deployed at Khojak and Chaman. 264 and 266 LAA Batteries were deployed at Zhob and Domandi Cantonment. On 13 March 1982 at 0900 hours, troop ex 266 LAA Battery deployed at Domandi hit a Russian MI-8 Helicopter<sup>174</sup> with 37 millimetre Gun while intruding from Afghanistan. Number 1267817 Havildar Bashir was Number-1 and Captain Aslam was troop Commander. Helicopter crashed in Afghanistan territory. Later Katiba Mujahid was replaced and 94 LAA was deployed in Domandi and Chaman till June 1986.

From October 1979 to January 1980, initially only one battery of the **98 LAA** was deployed at Parachinar valley. Later, other subunits were also deployed during Russian occupation of Afghanistan, One Composite LAA Battery was deployed at Landi Kotal from 6 April

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1980 to 17 June 1982, another LAA Battery at Mohmand Ghat from 21 May 1980-17 June 1982. The first LAA Battery to reach Chitral was from 98 LAA, it arrived at Chitral on 14 September 1980 and remained deployed till June 1982. These were the first elements of LAA Artillery, who reached Chitral by road with guns towed. It was fortunate to be commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Fahim Khan Durrani SJ.

In September 1987, **88 LAA** moved for operational deployment in **Arawali** and **Parachinar** (Western Border). Regiment while deployed at Parachinar shot down a Russo-Afghan air craft AN-12 at 2020 hours on 19 November 1988. The air craft violated the air space of Pakistan by entering from North West at a height of 15,000 feet. The moment, air craft was in range at a height of about 3000 meter, Master Command Post of 88 LAA Regiment ordered all weapon to fire, although it was night yet the standard of accurate fire displayed by the gunners of Mardan-e-Haq was excellent. The aircraft crashed on the outskirts of the city at 2028 hours.<sup>175</sup> All ranks of Mardan-e-Haq displayed the greatest sense of courage and professionalism and truly lived upto their slogan of ‘Terror in the Sky’.

### **Khyber Pass**

The **100 LAA** was re-raised at Risalpur and remained station there from December 1982 to March 1988. During its stay its subunits were deployed on operational tasks of protection of Pakistan Air Force Radar Station at Fort Samana from December 1983 to December 1986 and at Aranwali from October 1984 to December 1986.

**102 LAA** remained operationally deployed along Pakistan - Afghan border from January 1980 to May 1982. The protection of

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<sup>175</sup> War Diary of 88 LAA.

various assets in Landi Kotal, Thall, Arawali, Miran Shah, Alizai and Para Chinar. All ranks of the unit performed their duties steadfastly and prevented intruding Russian or Afghan aircrafts from causing any damage to assets in area of responsibility.

**104 LAA** remained operationally deployed at Chaman, Tabina Plateau and Dobandi. During operational deployment at Chaman, the unit shot down two MIG-21 Russian aircraft (on 3 May 1988 and 12 June 1988) which violated Pakistan air space. In recognition, 104 LAA was awarded with one Sitara-e-Basalat' and four Chief Of Army Staff Commendation Cards. In recognition of this gallantry account unit was honoured with the motto of '*Fakhr-e-Chaman*'. The detachment comprised of soldiers:-Number 2945794 Havildar Tariq Khan ,Number 2994698 Naik Abid Hussain Number 2997478 Naik Ghulam Rasul and Number 3057961 Gunner Nasir Mehmood.

**125 SCR Regiment**, during Afghan War established two FAADCs, one at Peshawar and other at Thal on Kurram. The CRCP was also established at Lal Kurti (Rawalpindi). These FAADCs (by 446 Battery) were manned around the clock, getting radar pictures and passing on the information to the deployed LAA Regiments in the Kurram. The CRCP was monitoring the overall situation .

In 1985, **126 LAA** was assigned the responsibility along western border to defend air space being violated by Russo-Afghan aircrafts. In 1986, once the activity of Soviet aircraft increased on the border, *Our Regiment shot down a Soviet aircraft<sup>176</sup> near 'Tarri Mangal' post. 'unit successfully defended the air space of Parachinar, Thall and Miran Shah for three years'*. In recognition of the great performance of the 126 LAA Regiment in operational area, Regimental Motto 'Victorious' was approved.

At Khyber, a battery of 29 LAA was deployed, Lieutenant Ibrahim Anjum (Brigadier retired) was a newly posted officer. 'Our

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*guns were deployed in the city to protect the PAF Radar at Topsar, we were living inside the Khyber Rifles Mess. I also served with another battery of my regiment at Mohmand Ghat and also at other battery at Bajaur. The environments were enjoyable; we would spend the day with the guns. The Russian and Afghan aircraft and gunships were quite visible but they were flying inside their own territory. The road conditions were primitive, we would always give the lift to the locals while moving in the area, we had excellent relationships with the tribes. Track to the few gun positions was precarious, as it involved steep driving and turns. We had Gaz jeeps with us , during one such move, one of our jeep turned over and rolled over into the ravine, there was no fatal casualty but Lieutenant Shadad Khan was badly hurt and remained hospitalised for few months’.*

## **Miran Shah**

Miran Shah is the administrative capital of North Waziristan, during Afghan resistance it was the hub of major tribal alliances including Haqqani fighting inside Afghanistan. The most prominent and distinctive thing about Miran Shah is its 8000 feet long metallic runway, the air field was built during the British campaigns on the frontier after the WWI. Renowned military historian Colonel T.E. Lawrence also served at Miran Shah as an airman in RAF. Air field was developed more specifically during 1936-1947 when British were in search of Faqir of Ipi

**127 MAA Regiment** (one battery) remained deployed on Western Border (Parachinar, Thall and Miranshah) from September 1984 to February 1989. Regiment was dispatched to Miran Shah following, the landing of a defected AN-26 on 22 September 1984 at the Miran Shah air field. The most dreaded and fearful Russian Helicopter of Cold War era was the Hind. On the afternoon of 13 July 1985 at 1120 hours two Hind landed at the tarmac of Miran

Shah. These helicopters flew nap of the earth avoiding any hostile ground fire, they just pop- up close to Saidgi and before anyone could react they were over head the Tochi Scouts Fort and after brief hovering they both landed, fully armed. On 5 August 1988 at 2010 hours, a Russian SU-25 that had intruded into Pakistan was shot down by an F-16 of PAF. The wreckage fell in general area of Khar Kamar.

During this deployment, the unit shot down AN-12 aircraft of Afghan Air Force at Parachinar for violating Pakistan's Air Space on 19 November 1988. A LAA Regiment (88 LAA) was also deployed in the close vicinity, thus both regiments claim the hit.

### **Kurram Valley**

Kurram valley is an old civilisation, mentioned in Rig Veda as Kurmu, it is known after the principal river of the same name which runs for almost 70 miles bisecting the valley, in a north-south direction before it turns into a south westerly direction at Thall<sup>177</sup> and enters into the plains of North Waziristan Agency and is join by the Kaitu River. Thus Kurram Valley is the area between the Thall in the south to the semi-circular mountain range of Safeed Koh in the north in which Sikaram is the highest peak (15620 feet). Valley is regarded by many as the most beautiful and scenic among all the valleys of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). It ascends or descends in a gradual manner with Parachinar the headquarters of the agency in far north having an elevation of 5750 feet and Thall in south at 2150 feet.

Major tribes which inhabit the valley are Turi, Bangash, Mengal, Para Chamkani, Muqbal, and Zadgran. Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 again put Kurram Valley in forefront as it absorbed the largest number of Afghan Refugees among all the tribal

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<sup>177</sup> Thall in Pashtu means a point where the river bends due to mountain.



agencies, it had 33 camps with 3,47,146 refugees living in it<sup>178</sup>; the total population of valley excluding the refugees was 2,88,835, thus by 1986 the Afghan refugees outnumbered the locals.

Afghan War was an exciting period, the agency was bustling with the refugees, army units also came in and the present army mess and barracks were constructed in 1979, It created an altogether a different environments never felt before in the history of valley, all tribes became united, and there was no difference on sectarian grounds and neither any division on the lines of tribal or settled areas. Afghan aircraft were regularly violating the own airspace, mostly cutting the salient north of Parachinar. AA elements were thus deployed to counter this violation.

### **303 MAA Battery at Parachinar**

First MAA Battery at Parachinar was from 127 MAA, and it was rotated by a battery from 58 MAA in September 1986. The 303 MAA Battery moved undercommand Major Alvi by train from Sargodha and arrived at Kohat, after few days at Kohat, it moved by road and deployed at Roberts Garden , five miles west of Parachinar town and airport. Battery had manpower from all the other batteries of the regiment, battery commanders were also rotated and included Major Mussarat and Major Abrar, Captain Abdus Sami Khan was the only Pashtu speaking officer in the regiment, thus he remained deployed with the battery for the entire duration. Apart from battery commander and Captain Sami Khan one more officer (lieutenant) was on the strength of the battery. *‘I was briefed by my Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Sarwar on the sensitivity of deployment. I took a bus (Muslim Bus Service) from Sargodha which after a whole night journey reached Peshawar. At that time there were daily wagon and bus services from Sargodha to frontier*

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178 Defence Journal, volume XVIII, No,1,1983 *Afghan Refugees in Pakistan*, by Brigadier (r) Saeed Azhar.

*towns including Miran Shah. I took a wagon from Peshawar for Parachinar which had a stop at Kohat and Thal. Ahead of Thal the scenery is beautiful with high trees on both sides of the road, covering the entire road with their shade. Till Thal a narrow gauge railway track also runs parallel. In the wagon all were Afghan refugees, there were few women clad in shuttle- cock burqa; I was the only one wearing a shirt and trouser. Wagon reached Parachinar in the afternoon, I then walked to the Frontier Corps Mess and rang up the battery, soon Captain Sami came in a Toyota jeep and we left for the battery location. Now it was partial dark, Captain Sami enroute was greeting almost everyone in Pashtu with a smile. He also briefed me that Russians had dropped toy mines in the area thus one has to be very careful.*

*Major Abrar Ul Waheed was the battery commander, Subedar Taj was the battery SJCO, and entire battery had dug up the bunkers for living and ammunition storage. It was deployed in a horse shoe pattern, guns were not placed on higher pits rather they were on a flat ground with raised mud walls for protection, all around was a barbed wire and sentries patrolled the area. The deployment area itself was flat, a salient is formed on the west of Parachinar, thus we had Afghanistan on our three sides and Teri Mangal Pass was directly in front (north). The Russian, Afghan jets and helicopters often fly over the salient and this constitutes as air violation. One battery of 126 LAA was also deployed ahead of us on salient features. There was little use of the Radar rather it was more of visual observation, we had observers during day time. Fire control orders were given by the PAF authorities and it was important to adhere to them as own aircraft would also fly in the area.*

*Life in battery started with stand –to in the morning in which all guns were manned, then breakfast which was rich in nature. Battery was authorised extra ration during deployment and we all officers*

*were dinning from the cook house for which we were paying. There was feeble electricity available in our battery from the city.*

*The intruding aircraft would pass through the salient; however this time of flight was too short to engage them. Not once these aircraft flew over the town of Parachinar. During day time while monitoring the skyline, area all around was also scanned, there were regular flow of trucks going and coming from Afghanistan, although they numbered around a dosen a day. Later when Captain Sami took me to the Teri Mangal in jeep, I realise these trucks were actually picking up the refugees from the foothill of the pass. During that drive to the top of Teri Mangal, we stopped at few places of locals all of them were armed with AK-47. At one woodcutter place, who was Afghani refugee, I saw, his AK-47 with two magazines taped together and hanging with a tree, it was an impressive display of locals alertness. The town of Parachinar itself was a bustling place, plenty of fruit and dry fruit and other Russian items including their double and single barrel shot guns; they had distinct marking of a Rabbit and Fox on their butt. The bazaar was full of Russian weapons and also American military kit items which included much sought after American field jacket, shoes, sleeping bag and backpacks.*

*25 December 1986 was a routine day, cold but sunny. Being a national holiday, life in battery was rather festive. A bara khana was arranged to celebrate the birthday of Father of Nation. At noon, two MI-24 gunships of Afghan Air Force entered own area over Peiwar Kotal. They were picked up by own observer and a high alert was sounded, all guns were occupied and range was calculated, these helicopters were beyond our effective range. Battery Commander ordered fire and as our battery and perhaps the LAA battery also opened up fire on these helicopters. The Gunships first fired flares, almost a dosen flares were fired by both which illuminated the area with bright light, it was to counter any SAM, while hovering they fired six to eight rockets on the town out of which one landed at the Kurram Militia Officers Mess and partially damaged one wall.*

*In another incident, which took place almost ten kilometres away from our location, On 18 March 1986, four, Afghan aircraft bombed and strafed Kurram Militia Post at Karshaya, which was being commanded by Naib Subedar Shah Jehan Khattak (Kurram Militia), who valiantly opened his 14-5mm anti-aircraft gun on the intruders, resultantly he along with four other soldiers embraced shahadat and eight other were wounded.*

*In April 1986, our battery received orders to pull back, we took a day to pack all our equipment, bunkers were left intact. We drove back at night and reached Kohat in the morning in our Uni-Mogs, where we realised that one rifle G-3 is missing, again a party moved back, found it and we then left Kohat by a special train for Sargodha.*

## **Stinger Missile**

Stinger shoulder fired man portable SAM missile was developed by Raytheon of USA in 1981. It created a hype yet it was untested in the battle field. In 1984, when the war against the Russian forces had intensified, it was realised that major limitations of the Mujahedeen was in facing the Russian and Afghan aircraft and gunship helicopters. Mujahedeen had SA-7 which they had captured from the Russian army, furthermore they also received Blow Pipe a British portable SAM but it proved highly ineffective as in one engagement thirteen Blow Pipes were fired without any hit. Arming the Mujahedeen with Swiss 35 mm Oerlikon was also considered but it was not favoured, reason being that it required minimum ten mules to carry it in parts, moreover the length of the barrel was another factor as mules had to traverse long distances and pass through defiles. In March 1986, USA administration decided to arm Afghan and Angolan freedom fighters with Stingers.<sup>179</sup>

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179 *Washington Post* 31 March 1986. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP90-00965R000302320049-2.pdf>

In August 1985, Lieutenant Colonel Russel Moore of US Army (Air Defence Fort Bliss, Texas) came to Pakistan for preliminary reconnaissance for conducting a training on Stingers. In last week of September 1985 a special training cadre was conducted in 95 LAA, in which apart from host regiment, officers and men from 29 LAA, 126 LAA, 94 LAA and 6 LAA underwent training . On 17 October 1985, a graduation ceremony was conducted at Peshawar attended by Major General Agha Masood and Brigadier Altaf Hussain.

Brigadier retired Rizwan then a captain narrates. *‘I was the course senior and also the liaison officer with the US training team, the team was staying at Inter-Continental Hotel Peshawar. Initially the cadre was meant for officers only but later other ranks were also inducted. There was a model(simulator) of Stinger on which we were given training. Apart from myself, Captains Shoaib, Naveed, Aftab , Amjad Khan, Muhammad Khan and Gilani were trained. Sergeant Heinz was our instructor. We also carried out live tracking at Jamrud firing ranges where jets of PAF provided us the real time tracking practice on the Stinger.*

Letter of commendation was also rendered by Chief Stinger MTT, Colonel Russell More to Havildar Falak Sher (Later retired as Subedar Major of the Regiment). On November 1985, 350 LAA Battery of the unit after undergoing the course was converted into Stinger Equipped Mobile Missile Battery and was placed as 11 Corps Reserved. During deployment of the unit at Topsar on Pakistan-Afghan border, unit was visited by American Under Defence Secretary Dr Fred Ikle accompanied by Lieutenant General Mirza Aslam Baig, Commander 11 Corps. 347 LAA Battery was deployed at Topsar, 348 LAA Battery at Warsak and 349 Battery at Peshawar Air Base. The trained teams on Stinger were later acted as nucleus for the raising of independent Missile batteries.

Stinger Batteries were deployed at Arandu (29 LAA) Wana (126 LAA) Miranshah (6 LAA) at Domandi (104 LAA) Topsar (95LAA). These batteries had a positive impact as the air space violation reduced considerably. In 1986, a firing of Stingers was carried out at Sonmiani Ranges, Karachi. One key factor for this firing was that few Stingers were fired at Miranshah but they failed to hit the target. American team accompanied by representatives of manufacturer were also present, Americans had brought the practice target as well. Few modifications were carried out and two Stingers were fired and they both were hit.

Till August 1987, no less than 187 Stingers were fired by Mujahedeen and 140 aircraft were downed. All in all before the withdrawal of Russian forces, 269 aircraft were hit with 340 engagements.

## **Siachen Glacier**

Siachen Glacier measuring seventy odd miles in length is the largest glacier outside Polar region, lying in disputed Kashmir region. Pakistan is blessed with geographical wonders, the three greatest mountain ranges in the world namely Hindukush, Karakorum and Himalayas confluence near Gilgit, north of Islamabad. The western frontiers of Kashmir are high mountains including K-2, Broad Peak, and Hidden Peak all above 8000 meters, important and major towns include Skardu, Leh, Kargil and Laddakh, Glaciers and passes which are few and having altitude of over 15000 feet, allows inter valley foot movement in summer only, during winter the entire region is buried under feet of snow with temperature dropping to below 20 Celsius.

**305 Independent LAA Battery** was part of 29 LAA Regiment; in 1972 it was detached and redesignated as Independent LAA Battery.

Soon the battery was sent to Skardu for a period of two years. It was the first dedicated element of AA at Skardu. The road journey was a gigantic affair, as the Karakorum Highway (KKH) was still under construction. Battery after four days of road journey finally reached Skardu and took up position astride the air strip. A mud complex was constructed on self-help basis for accommodation and storage. At that time, no special winter clothing was issued rather the existing high altitude uniform comprising of woollen khaki jersey and great coat was issued; it was quite comfortable. Skardu was one of the most isolated airstrip at that time, weather permitting the commercial flight of Fokker seldom operated as schedule. Words of appreciation for the pilotability of PIA as the air strip was quite short and had little to offer in case of any emergency. This flight also provided much needed laying practice for the AA gunners. Early warning in case of war to the LAA Battery was an enigma which remained unsolved for a long time to come. The communication infrastructure was very rudimentary and getting any timely early warning from Rawalpindi or from PAF was a mind baffling issue. LAA Battery moved to Lahore in June 1974 but was back again at Skardu in October 1982. This time around the situation was comparatively better than a decade ago yet it was still one of the most isolated station.

In 1980, Pakistan detected Indian incursion in own area through the local villagers. Later Pakistan deployed an infantry brigade to keep an eye on the likely Indian misadventure. In 1982, regular and Northern Light Infantry battalions were deployed at the forward edges to keep the passes like Gyong La, under control. High posts including Saddle (19500 feet) were established. It was more of a challenge to survive the extreme cold weather.

By end 1984, Siachen had become a matter of talk and conversation in the messes and offices. Since very few had been

there thus fables more than reality was the source of imagination. Soon it became a matter of an ego for every army officer, he has to be posted there; without the experience of Siachen life was incomplete.

**First Missile Detachment of Anti-Aircraft** arrived in Siachen during the spring of 1985, two missile detachments one from 6 LAA under Captain Muhammad Khan and other from 100 LAA under Captain Saleem Raza. *‘A missile troop of this Regiment was sent to Siachen Glacier in 1985. Besides fighting the enemy, troops of “The Glorious” had to face adverse weather conditions for which they were not adequately equipped. Three soldiers embraced Shahadat and Gunner Pervaiz Akhtar was awarded Tamgha-e-Basalat’.*

The missile detachment comprised of sixteen men, they reached Skardu by road from Rawalpindi and after few days of acclimatization drove to the respective infantry brigade. The road was under construction thus only a single track, Uni-Mog was the main mode of transportation. At brigade headquarters they were issued with winter clothing which comprised of white high altitude suit, high altitude shoes, pair of woollen socks, mitten, sun glasses and rucksack. The detachment after briefing and area familiarisation reached its destined post at an altitude of 14500 feet. There are many posts higher than this but due to the mission, which was to shoot the Indian helicopter, the detachment was stationed at appropriate height. Indians were using their Cheetak helicopters for the logistics and probably casualty evacuation missions. The flight path of the helicopters was well defined, rather the terrain itself was such that they had to follow the set pattern especially at forward posts. A missile was fired but it missed the target, it was first time in history that missiles were being fired at such high altitude and low temperatures therefore their behaviour was unpredictable. Yet the aim was fulfilled even without destroying the Indian helicopter, they became aware of the presence of missiles in the area and thus had to change their flying pattern.



Missiles have one major limitation as compared to guns, they required a battery for firing, it is small in size thus have limited capacity. At Siachen, it was not possible to arm the missile all day long due to battery constraints, thus on clear weather when rotary flying was more likely, the missile detachment would wait, listening to any sound in the air or an early warning from other posts. During winter flying is very restricted, bad weather at posts lasts for weeks in stretch. The posts itself becomes isolated with meters of snow rendering movement a precarious exercise. Avalanches and snow slides are routine affair, communication lines requires constant repair even in snow storms, food cooking at posts is an uphill task and to attend the call of nature an even more hazardous affair.

In 1987, to reach a viable solution to the AA requirement at Siachen, new missile batteries were raised (475, 476 and 477) these batteries for next decade before they were merged into the AD Regiments were the backbone of AD at Siachen. Young Officers from AA were also attached with the infantry regiments at Siachen for a period of 3-6 months as Ghazi officers. It was a matter of great pride to serve in Siachen, officers wrote demi-official letters to commander 10 Corps volunteering themselves for the service at Siachen. The ghazi officer even before he had left for the Siachen was treated with respect in the regiment. The move started from Rawalpindi, where either a PIA flight or an army coaster was the only way to reach Skardu. In winter flights would delay for days thus road move was the ultimate solution. Early in the morning an army coaster would depart from Rawalpindi and reached Jaglot by evening which was the night halt and next evening coaster would reach Skardu. After few days at Skardu, officers would move by road to various sectors, reporting to the infantry brigades which would further attach them with respective infantry regiments. After reporting at the designated infantry regiment, officer would be given few days of training in handling high altitude equipment. Siachen

have two faces, one is beautiful in summer when there are patches of green, wild roses, birds and occasional animals like fox. In winter, it is still beautiful but deadly in nature, cervices hidden under meters of snow, week long snow storm and all around is nothing but snow. At posts which were at high altitude and perched on the edges of mountains and rocks requiring ropes and jhummar to climb up, the space was marginal, enough to have one igloo. Ideally an post required troops living, cooking, sentry post and toilet; seldom all the requirement were met. On successful and graceful completion of his tenure an officer on his arrival back in parent AA Regiment was treated more or less like a hero, commanding officer would arrange special durbar and 'bara khana' in his honour. These gestures were natural and were important as they motivated other officers to join the battle at Siachen.

## **Operation Qiadat**

The plan to recapture Quaid Observation Post involved capturing of Bilafond La itself including vital posts of Rana and Akbar on the left mouth of the Bilafond La. These two posts Rana and Akbar located at a height of 19000 feet are not straight in line with each other rather a Saddle joins them. Both had sharp gradients towards own side but gradual slope on the enemy side. The operation to capture these posts was code named 'Operation Qiadat'.

## **Missile Battery**

A Stinger Missile Battery undercommand Major Ehtisham was deployed at Skardu to support the operations in Siachen Glacier, during Operation Qiadat, a detachment was move forward. Captain Rizwan (Brigadier retired) highlights. *'I was in Peshawar when at midnight I received the orders to report at HQ AA Command at Rawalpindi. Colonel Hafeez Malik was the Colonel Staff he briefed*

*me next day. I had to move to Skardu immediately alongwith a detachment and nothing more was told. Unfortunately the weather was bad thus there was no flight, we were supposed to be taken by a C-130. We at midday moved by road, staying night at Shinkiari and other night at Jaglot , on third day we reached Skardu. After reporting to the battery commander, I was told to move immediately to the forward infantry brigade location. Myself and my team of four soldiers were still wearing the summer uniform, we were given few items of winter and high altitude equipment and we travelled by Uni-Mog to the brigade headquarters which we reached well after night. From brigade headquarters in the morning we arrived at forward position and here I was pleasantly surprised to meet Captain Salik Nawaz Cheema, we had been together at Rawalpindi for well over a year thus it was joy to be in his company. He gave me an insight into the forth coming operation apart from sharing his high altitude kit.'*

22 September 1987, the operation was launched at 1030 hours in the morning by hitting the enemy bunkers, first TOW hit enemy bunker at La position, second one missed the bunkers at Akbar and third one narrowly missed own forward troops. In the evening at 1825 hours assault commenced on Rana, two hours later heavy snow blocked own advance.

At 0500 hours 23 September 1987, Captain Nazaratt and Captain Imran along with their men were 150-200 yards short of Rana Top. As soon as these SSG men started coming out from the cover and started their tactical ascend, they came under enemy fire and thus whole day the small attacking team was pinned down. More reinforcement moved from base camp. **Captain Salik Cheema** who had also climbed to evacuate a casualty was ordered to reinforce Captain Imran, which he managed to do so at 1700 hours. Thus at dusk, the entire ridge line from Tabish onwards had SSG troops.

Indians brought the artillery air bursts and machine gun fire on the ridge line. SSG responded back, thus a requirement for ammunition replenishment, **Captain Iqbal** and Captain Afridi carried the ammunition from base camp and became part of the assaulting force. Meanwhile, Captain Waseem at base camp was tasked to find an alternate route from Rahbar to Tabish, which he did with his men and also fixed the safety ropes.

On 24 September at first light the operation started. Progress was slow but it was inching upwards, at such heights both defender and attacker have certain advantages, as a defender, the height, observation and the certainty that attacker can only climb upwards from one direction only, is a great advantage. Attacker, can still close in by making use of the blind and dead spots offered by the boulders. It was the final ascent which was important, it can only be made by using the extreme resources of own body's depleting energy, sheer will power, very high state of morale and a good amount of luck. **Captain Salik Cheema** initiated the assault and finally reached the top, where he and his three men were hit with enemy fire, they returned the fire but soon took their last breath and embraced martyrdom at the top mere yards short of the objective.

Captain Iqbal was hit with enemy fire at close range but he still managed to knock off a bunker with rocket launcher. By 0200 hours, there was a close proximity fire going on at the top. Space was not enough for both attackers or defenders to manoeuvre, thus fire exchange kept going on. Indians launched a fiery counter attack by bringing fire upon 'own position'. At 0430 hours, a volley of machine gun fire took the life of Captain Iqbal. All in all there were thirteen dead bodies and twenty five own soldiers were wounded. At last light 26 September 1987, own troops started descending down to base camp. ***Captain Iqbal was decorated with Hilal-e-Jurat and Captain Salik Nawaz Cheema with Sitara-e-Jurat. Both are***

*national hero and their act of valour is a golden chapter of our military history.*

Captain Salik Nawaz Cheema (ex 67 Long Course) was commissioned in 127 MAA in 1983. He was a happy go lucky officer; he despite his casual looks topped his basic AA Course. He remained attached with Giraffe Radar from the day that radar arrived in Pakistan. Later Captain Salik Cheema volunteered himself for SSG; however his application was not forwarded by his regiment as they did not want to lose him. Captain Salik practically went to Attock Fort for initial tests from Sargodha sitting on the roof of a private bus. Reason being that due to Muharram all private transport was off road. Captain Salik Cheema was a keen follower of military history and very fond of reading books.

Lieutenant Sohail Nawaz (Major Retired) of 75 Light Air Defence Regiment '**Katiba Mujahid**' during his volunteered tenure at Siachen on 4 February 1993 was assigned mission, to deploy 37 millimetre Single Barrel Gun at the Bilafond La Sector at the height of 15000 feet. Although it was a challenging task but the officer accomplished it with great zeal and enthusiasm. He suggested to Brigadier Anwari Shahid (later got shahadat), Commander 323 Brigade that gun could only be carried by stripping into parts and lifting it by helicopter. This plan was approved and helicopter was provided. The officer solely managed to strip the gun into parts and shifted to the required place. During this operation major problem was to lift the main girder of the gun (weight 450 Kilogram) whereas lifting capacity of the Lama helicopter was 250 Kilogram in summer season. Major Khalid Sultan (Shaheed) a Lama pilot took the risk and lifted gun by reducing the laden weight of Lama. After consecutive four days of laborious efforts, the officer managed to deploy first ever Air Defence gun on the top of the world. He also had the profound honour of firing the first ever Air Defence gun on the enemy in Siachen Sector. This position was later recognized

as “**Katiba Mujahid Gun Position**’. 57mm anti-aircraft Guns were also deployed at Siachen for the very first time in February 1997 by two detachments comprising of four NCOs and eight soldiers of 96 MAA Regiment at Shaqma Sector. They remained deployed till November same year.

In 1995, **102 LAD Regiment** was provided a chance to prove its metal once again when it was tasked to deploy the newly inducted **SA-16 Surface to Air Missile** in Siachen. On 14 August a contingent of one Officer, one Junior Commissioned Officer and thirteen soldiers left for emergency training on SA-16 Infra-Red Missile System in Kahuta Research Laboratories. The unit completed its deployment of four missile detachments with 7 Northern Light Infantry Battalion on 23 August 1995, i.e just within a short span of nine days, without any acclimatization period. *‘The extreme terrain and climatic conditions of Siachen were overcome by our men with courage and perseverance. Finally, the moment of glory for the unit came on 17 October 1995, when at Qasim Post, Missile detachment received a warning of an Indian helicopter approaching the area. The detachment timely positioned itself for the hunt. At about 1445 hours, an Indian Lama Helicopter appeared and Number 2998128, Naik Muhammad Amir laid a milestone in the unit history by shooting down the Indian helicopter with the successful fire of SA-16 Missile’.*

One troops of the **135 AD Regiment** remained deployed at Pune Sector from September 1995 to May 1997. The dedication and professionalism of all ranks of **Falak Shagaf** came into the action during this tenure. Havildar Gunner Abdul Hamid and Lance Havildar Muhammad Khan destroyed two Indian Helicopters at Qaim and Ashraf Posts on 13 September and 17 October 1995. For this achievements both of them were awarded COAS Commendation Cards and sent for Hajj by Army.

Naik Noor Hussain, was deputed at Mir Post in Qamar Sector, Siachen. **On 26 August 1996**, despite heavy small arms fire from an adjacent Indian post he successfully engaged an Indian MI-17 helicopter with SA-16 SAM and resultantly the helicopter was completely destroyed. Naik Noor Hussain was awarded **Tumgha-e-Basalat** in recognition of his achievement. **Naik Muhammad Aslam**, ex 476 AD (I) Missile Battery was appointed Firer of Missile Detachment deployed in Lazawal Sector. **On 25 January 1997**, he fired SA-16 SAM on Indian Cheetak helicopter approaching from Hindu-II Feature and resultantly the helicopter blasted in air. Naik Muhammad Aslam was awarded **COAS** Commendation Card in recognition of his achievement

On 17 July 1998, thirty-two volunteer soldiers of the **145 Light Air Defence** were organised into an Air Defence Troop and move for Siachin under the command of Captain Muhammad Asif Khalil. The troop moved to Ojari Camp Rawalpindi, where two weeks of training of SA-16 missile was carried out. After the successful training the troop moved for Skardu by road via Basham, Pattan & Jaglot. It reached Skardu after three days of traveling and reported in 479 Independent Missile Battery. This troop stayed for two weeks at Skardu for acclimatization. After acclimatization it moved to brigade headquarter at Dunsum.

Brigade consisted of four sub sections i.e **Adil, Giang, Gayari & Karmanding**. Two posts in Giang and Gayari section were occupied. Third post at “**Sabit Qadam**” part of Karmanding section was occupied for fifteen days by Captain Muhammad Asif Khalil, Naik Muhhamad Ali, Lance Naik Riasat Ali and Operator Missile Manzoor Hussain. Post was vacated because of less effectiveness of Air Defence weapons at the post. At the time when Sabit Qadam post was established, other two parties also left for Yarmala post at Giang La and Tabish post at Gayari. Both parties move collectively till Goma. From there 16 Soldiers under the commands of Naib Subedar Muhammad Akram move to Yarmala post in Giang sub

section at height of 18000 feet. Whereas remaining soldiers move to Tabish post in Gayari sector under command Havildar Abdul Ghafoor at a height of 18200 feet. The troops remain deployed in Siachen from August 1998 to May 1999. During the stay at Siachen, two missile were fired. One from Tabish post by Havildar Ghafoor and second from Yarmala post by Havildar Khair Muhammad.

## **Epilogue**

The conflict at Siachen and Afghanistan did not died but like old wars they reappeared. Kargil War in 1999 was fought on the same mountain ranges and it followed an identical pattern when isolated posts vacated by Indians in winter were occupied by the freedom fighters. In Afghanistan, there never was a true peace yet its path to normalcy was shattered by the 9/11, which put Pakistan as a frontline state, our Western Border again became Eye of the Storm.



## *Chapter Eight*

### **Raising of Army Air Defence**

On 1 March 1989, the existing Anti-Aircraft system of Pakistan Army was transitioned into Army Air Defence (AAD) with Major General Agha Masood Hassan as the first commander, he remained in command for another two years; overall Major General Agha remained in command for over seven years.

Raising of a new corps in army is an exception rather than a rule. In 1918, when Royal Flying Corps was being separated from Royal Army, a lot of resistance was shown by the army. Similarly in 1939 when Air Observation Corps was being created as an exclusive air arm for the army, an equally fierce resistance and opposition was put forward by RAF. In Pakistan the inter services rivalry has been more on sports ground and at parades rather than on strategic decisions. Air Chief Marshal Asghar Khan stands out as the most liberal and forward looking commander in such customary matters. In 1976, Pakistan Army took an unprecedented step when it became one of the few armies in the world to have an Army Aviation Corps. Thus culturally Pakistan Army is modern in outlook and has been abreast of its adversaries in bringing organisational changes within its formations, arms and services.

The question of having an independent corps of Anti-Aircraft was much debated in the aftermath of 1971 War, AA was part of Corps of Artillery and as such the mother arm was not willing to let go the AA from its folds. First and foremost reason for resisting any such move is inherent in the military culture where no arm willingly parts from its troops. Gunners were more than reluctant to allow the raising of a separate arm, which in their view was still dealing with guns and as such remains an integral part of them.

Major General Agha Hassan Masood stands out as the commander who relentlessly through study periods, and presentations kept on highlighting the gospel on which he had a firm belief, that Anti-Aircraft by nature is different from field artillery thus it should be separated from artillery and be given a new entity of Air Defence. The term air defence encompasses much more than mere anti-aircraft, in the former it is concerned at the integrity and safety of airspace at national level, at all tiers, whereas the latter term is more concentrated at the low level threat only. Egypt is one of the few countries which have a separate service as Air Defence, which controls and co-ordinates the entire anti-aircraft defences of the Egypt. Thus Egyptian model is worth studying. Egypt in 1968 after the destruction of its air force on ground realised that future war with Israel cannot be won without ample air defence. In the next war in 1973, Egyptians performed much better than in 1967.

Major General Agha from 1984 soon after taking over command preached his doctrine of separate arm for air defence during his visits to the AA Regiments and AA School. The concept of anti-aircraft itself underwent an etymological interpretation, it was no more merely an aircraft intruding rather it includes missiles and more importantly the early detection of enemy aircraft and its passage to the firing units. Major General Agha concentrated on the AA defence of field formations and was able to convince the field commanders that, a separate arm is the answer to their appreciation of future war. Aircraft is logically and technically bound to play a decisive role in the outcome of a future war thus a dedicated arm for defence of ground troops from air is the most viable solution. Raising of two new AA Brigades, 101 AA Brigade and 102 AA Brigade in 1987; both exclusive for the field formations, tilted the balance in the favour of raising a new arm to provide Air Defence to the country.

General Ehsan (CJCSC retired) narrates *‘In 1988, I was commanding the 19(SP) LAA in Multan; General K.M.Arif was the*

*Colonel Commandant of Artillery and was on a visit. I along with other gunner officers also attended the lunch in his honour at Artillery Mess, after the lunch, we all gathered in the ante room and discussion reached to the point where a gunner officer inquired from him regarding his views on the separation of AA from artillery. General K.M. Arif rather inquired from the gathering their views on this and thus I being the commanding officer of the only AA regiment in the Multan was asked to give my views. The atmosphere in the ante room all of a sudden became serious and all gunners were waiting for the comments, I drew courage and highlighted that although I wear artillery badges and as such is recognised as gunner, yet I cannot qualify to be a brigade major in this very artillery brigade, no matter that I have been a brigade major in an infantry brigade. I could not resist expressing myself that, it is more than anything else a crisis of identity which AA Gunners feel. General K.M.Arif gave a nod of approval ...I was literally taken to the task by my friends serving in divisional artillery over my views...after few months I came across Major General Agha and he gave me a pat on my shoulder and "I am happy my boy".*

### **Army Air Defence Corps**

Army Air Defence thus provided the much needed independent entity to the officers and men, Cadets at PMA started giving preferences for the new corps, before this a cadet had to give artillery as a choice to get posted to an AA Regiment. Officers were wearing the Blue Beret and as such were always taken as gunners and many at times it would baffle the seniors to know that AA gunnery is entirely opposite to the field artillery.

In army culture, an entity is half complete without a distinct beret, shoulder badges and titles. Endless mid night oil was burnt by the officers to design the insignia, and formation sign. General

Aslam Baig COAS took a keen and personal interest in these aspects. A presentation was given to him on the colour selection of the beret. It was a difficult task as almost all colours have already been taken by various regiments; Blue the colour of Regiment of artillery in any case was the last taboo colour. Initially Grey colour was selected as the colour of the Air Defence with a black engraved missile as insignia on beret. These six weeks in which the beret colour was yet to be finalised, the passing out parade (pilot course-30) at Army Aviation School at Rahwali took place in May 1989. Three officers who had joined the course while on strength of AA Regiments now passed out as pilots, representing Air Defence, they all mutually decided not to wear the grey colour beret as it is worn by ACC (Army Clerk Corps) but to wear black berets with the AD sign. This amply highlights the confusion around the colour of beret at that time. In September 1989, the colour of beret was change into present Maroon colour. Shoulder titles have the 'Chindi' also in Maroon to represent and distinct Army Air Defence from other services; fact remains that dress items reflects the status of the corps in army hierarchy and culture. Air defence from the onset was raised and adopted dress rules which are authorised only to fighting arms.

A new corps is not only about new dress items, it involves a separate directorate at GHQ, an independent training centre, own school. New arm raising greatly enhanced the air defence capabilities of the country. Budget allocation which previously was given from the artillery allocation was now a separate account. Selection and induction of new weapons now became more specific to the arm, thus more closely studied and test trialled.

AD Command was given the status of divisional headquarters. Major General Agha was able to bring all air defence regiments in Pakistan Army under the singular command of his headquarters. This centralisation of command was again unprecedented and as

such generated discussions among officers of all ranks. Before the centralisation, the AD regiments were organised into three tiers. First were the regiments under the command of the brigades and these brigades were primarily meant for deployment at airfields especially the MAAs. Each corps had an integral AD regiment to be deployed by the corps staff, each of the armoured divisions also had integral SP Air Defence regiments. Last were the independent AD Batteries deployed all across the Pakistan and were being commanded by logistics areas. This scheme of having all army air defence assets under one command infact was the very Scarlet Thread of the new arm, eventually it was foreseen that all such assets in the country among the services should be under one command. Major General Agha all along had advocated the difference between the artillery and air defence, he now through renumbering of anti-aircraft regiments cut off all ties with the history and insisted on starting fresh and new in this new entity.

### **Raising of Army Air Defence Groups**

The traditional organisation in army around the world is based upon regiment, brigade and division. In WWII, the concept of group was introduced and in Pakistan Army, during early years Artillery Groups were raised which later either became independent brigades or divisional artillery. In 1989, instead of designating its undercommand formation as division, AAD raised Army Air Defence Group. **3 Army Air Defence Group** was raised at Sargodha on 10 November 1989; Brigadier M.Burki who was already commanding the brigade was designated as the first group commander. Group organisation was similar to a division; it had two AD Brigades undercommand. In August 1990, Major General Rashid Beg was posted .

In south, **2 Army Air Defence Group** was raised on 10 December 1990, with Brigadier Rauf Khawaja as the acting commander, he

was already commanding the AD Brigade at Malir, thus it was an upgradation of the existing appointment. Brigadier Nazar Abbas was the first officiating general officer commanding. It was in August 1998, that first two star commander Major General Mujtaba Hassan was posted. The group headquarters were initially established in Karachi Lines and later shifted to Zahidan Lines.

In May-November 1995, these groups were re-designated into the more familiar divisions nomenclature, thus 3 AAD Group became 3 AAD Division and similarly 2 AAD Group became 4 AAD Division. Renumbering of AD Regiments was initiated in January 1991, Regiments were given fresh numbers, thus 5 Light Air Defence became 1 Air Defence Regiment and subsequently 74 Light Air Defence became 13 LAD. The step itself was based upon the concept that Air Defence being a new arm, thus it should start fresh and all links with past should be treated as history. This move was not welcome whole heartedly as regiments have decades and generations of affiliations with their original name, it is not merely a change in number, it amounts to taking birth again. After two years in April 1993 much to the delight of everyone the old numbers were reverted back.

### **Raising of Gun Missiles Regiments**

**145 GM Regiment** was raised at Malir on 22 June 1989 and became part of an Independent Armoured Brigade. Lieutenant Colonel Amir Afzal was the first commanding officer followed by Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Maqsood. It had 305 Gun Battery and 526 RBS-70 Battery as its tentacles.

**147 GM Regiment** was raised on 1 July 1989 by Lieutenant Colonel Saleem Khan, it has also been commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Hamood Uz Zaman in 2002-2004; he later rose to the rank

of three stars and commanded Army Air Defence. The raising history of 147 GM revolves around the famous 307 LAA Battery which was raised in September 1971 at Multan Cantonment as S Battery of 75 LAA Regiment with Major Akhtar Nazir as its first Officer Commanding. On 15 April 1972, the battery was re-designated as **307 Independent LAA Battery** under the command of Major Muzaffar Ali Khan and got deployed in Chhor to provide Air Defence to 75 Medium Regiment Artillery and 10 Cavalry (Guides). The battery also participated in Annual Anti-Aircraft Practice Fire in Korangi, Karachi in May 1972 and achieved the best results in firing. On 1 July 1989, the battery was designated as **147 Gun Missile Air Defence Regiment** with raising of 528 RBS-70 Battery to it. Regiment's Coat of Arms was designed by Captain (Major retired) Muhammad Tanveer Baig. Second Lieutenants Akhtar Ali and Muhammad Siddiq are the two first parental officers of the regiment, they both reported on 9 March 1990.

### **Zarb-e-Momin**

Zarb-e-Momin was the largest ever army exercise conducted (14 November -15 December 1989). It provided an excellent opportunity to put into field test, all the hypothesis of air warfare. The exercise scenario was realistic, it was a two sided exercise involving field formations. The concept of AD in field formations was fully tested, Oerlikon, Giraffe, Sky Guard and RBS-70 were put into extended field deployment. The early warning and its subsequent dissemination to the firing units which remained an Achilles Heel in the past was put to extreme limit and it came out with flying colours. The communication system was also tested. Air Defence more than any other arm or service really benefitted from this massive troop deployment, mobility in AD regiments was also much improved.

## **Air Defence, the First Decade**

Nineties started with Gulf War that took place due to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Operation Desert Shield started in August 1990 and lasted till January 1991. The peace of entire region was at stake, Pakistan also sent troops to Saudi Arabia including AD Regiments. The entire duration of the Desert Shield was important for army air defenders; they monitored the daily clippings and handouts. The war itself was the first modern war since WWII, airpower played a key role. From our perspective the effectiveness of Iraqi air defence system was an interesting feature. **44 (SP) Air Defence Regiment** was raised exclusively for deployment at Saudi Arabia. The regiment was equipped with latest air defence weapons issued by the Saudi Government. On 21 December 1990, Quebec Battery of 102 Light Air Defence Regiment was re-raised as 145 Independent Light Air Defence Battery commanded by Major Hasnat Ahmed, was placed under commander 330 Independent Infantry Brigade Group. The Battery participated in Gulf War from December 1990 to September 1991. Battery was repatriated to Pakistan on 15 September 1991.

**51 (SP) Air Defence Regiment.** After completion of unit's establishment by mid-January 1991, first contingent was air lifted by Saudi Airline from Karachi at 1330 hours on 13 January 1991 and landed at Tabuk Air Base at 1715 hours for participation in "Operation Desert Storm". A total of 20 x officers, 29 Junior Commissioned Officers and 388 Soldier were posted to the unit on its raising who proved their metal in years to come. On arrival at Tabuk, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia all ranks were put through extensive schedule of conversion training from 25 March to 22 April 1991 by the Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Tariq Abbassi. For this purpose training team was sent to Khamis for conversion training as nucleus instructor staff who in turn trained all ranks, before unit moved to border area Arr'r. Shaheen Air Defence missile System



was handed over to the unit to defend the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia against the envisaged Iraqi threat. Shaheen Air Defence Weapon System (Crotale a French Missile System) was operated by the unit during deployment in Gulf War at Saudi – Iraq border. During employment at Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, unit remained deployed at , Arr'r, Khamis and Tabuk. After a duration of nine months, on 14 September 1991 unit moved back from Tabuk Air Base to Pakistan in small groups. The repatriation was completed by 15 October 1991.

Another important international event was the pull-out from Afghanistan by the Russian forces. It finally set into motion the process of peace in that country. However the most dramatic event was the dismemberment of USSR itself. For long the fear of Russia in the region was the centre point of American intervention and interests in the region. Pakistan again had to face the embargo on military aid from USA starting from 1990, Air Defence is the least dependent of all arms and services in Pakistan on the American weapon system, as it has primarily weapons purchased and inducted from Europe.

In early nineties the difference between the mobile and semi-mobile AD Regiments was eliminated and all AD Regiments were made mobile. Another salient feature was the induction of Low Level Air Defence Radars (LAADS) for the C&R Regiments, these regiments were upgraded into surveillance, control and reporting Regiments. After Major General Agha, Major General Nazar took over the command (September 1991- May 1996), he was commissioned in a field regiment, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General in April 1992, and thus has the honour to be the first such officer to command it. He was succeeded by Major General Ihsan Zahid (May 1996-December 1997) also from field artillery. Major General Ihsan Zahid came into AD to command the

2 AD Group (June 1993- June 1996). He took a keen interest in this new arm, he spend a fortnight at SAAD attending various classes to upgrade himself to the current procedures in AD. In 1998, Lieutenant General Iftikhar Hussain Shah took over the command of AAD, a born and bred AA Gunner, who had served in all tiers of SAAA including being commandant as well. He was commissioned in 13 LAA and commanded 67 (SP) LAA. He after retirement served as Governor KPK and later as ambassador to Turkey.

After the Gulf War was over, Pakistan Army took certain steps in the nation building including desilting of canals, forest plantation, and survey of ghost schools in Punjab, maintaining of peace in Karachi and responding to threats of flood in summer. Within AD, the regiments took active part in all these nation building measures. Routine training was being followed religiously; focus was on attaining the mastery on new weapons and equipment. In 133 GM Regiment a second lieutenant had to made operational the Sky Guard Radar and 35 mm Oerlikon Gun all by himself in front of the regiment and commanding officers; he only gets the second pip if he is good enough to bring the troop into action. Many a subalterns had to appear again before being promoted.

### **Marqa-e-Bqa 28 May 1998**

On 28 May at 1515 hours, Pakistan conducted its successful nuclear test explosion and with this the major threat to our security since Indian nuclear explosion in 1974 was resolved. India had conducted few more tests on 11 and 13 May 1998. Ever since 1974, Pakistan had been trying everything under the sky to achieve this nuclear capability. In 1977, KRL laboratories were established and from this point till the explosion day, the protection of these strategic assets was responsibility of HQ AA Command and later AD Command. Initially only LAA Batteries were deployed, in

1982 an AA Brigade was raised and numbers of regiments for its protection were increased. After raising of AD Command, special attention was given for the AD of the area and the most modern array of AD weapons were deployed. Perhaps other than (SP) AD regiments, every regiment of AD has served in the area. Thus the successful test brought a sense of pride among every Air Defender serving or retired as this task was always taken and performed more as a sacred duty rather than a mere call of duty.

In the initial days regiments lived under tents and then with passage of time, underground bunkers were made on self-help basis. Gun positions were on flat ground where available, with observers on higher ground, connected with line field telephones. Regiments had two year deployment tenure; it was treated as an operational area. All night, the sentries would remain on high alert, guns manned by troops and operators scanning the radars. Rawalpindi was the nearest station, all troops would avail their leave from there. The installation itself remained part of international news headlines, thus security was extra heightened and sensitive. No foreigner was allowed to enter the area beyond a certain jurisdiction. Regiments had a particular way of working; it worked in shifts thus ready around the clock. Games in the evening was a major source of relaxation, officers would sit late in the field mess playing chess, television and VCR was a major source of entertainment and knowledge. Field mess in such environment attains special importance, as good food is a recipe for all loneliness.

It was a historical event at 'K' Area on 25 February 1983 when '**The Killer Regiment**' was tasked to establish gun positions at hill tops of Kahuta. Even though a daunting task, under the able command of Lieutenant Colonel Javed Manzoor Agha 37 mm AD Guns ex 97 Lt AD Regiment were Heli lifted and deployed at the elevated gun positions. *It was a stunning event to witness a great mass of steel hovering in the air with guns swaying under it.*

*The efforts of Army Aviation specially Lt Col Niaz Hussain Siddiqui (Pilot) cannot be overlooked for assisting the unit in employment of guns.*

On that particular day of 28 May 1998, the scenes at the deployed guns and missile posts was no less than festive, troops and officers embraced each other, singing national songs. Sweets were distributed and prayers were offered.

### **Army Air Defence in Kargil -1999**

Kashmir is a matter of dispute between Pakistan and India, two wars (1948 and 1965) had been fought over the Kashmir Valley. Pakistan's point is that this matter should be resolved according to the resolutions of UNO which India avoids. Kashmiris living on both side of the Line of Control (LOC) and Line of Actual Control (LAC) are restless over this impasse. In the summer of 1999, Kashmiri Mujahedeen (freedom fighters) after years of observation realised that Indian forces do vacate the high posts in winter and reoccupy them in summer. In spring of 1998, these mujahedeen took the initiative and occupied these posts before the Indian could climb up. Indian main line of communication in Kashmir (Srinagar-Leh) was now threatened and more specifically the strategic town of Kargil was now at the mercy of these mujahedeen. India in May 1999 after realising its precarious military posture rush in more troops and committed its air force as well; resultantly Pakistan Army also had to respond and deployed its troops including Air Defence, yet in order to keep the conflict confined did not employ its air force. Thus the summer of 1999 is a golden chapter in the history of Army Air Defence when it was wholly entrusted with nullifying the Indian air power.

Army Air Defence (AAD) regiments had a vast experience of operating in the mountainous regions thanks mainly to the Russian

invasion of Afghanistan. Mountainous terrain of Hindu Kush is different from the Himalayan ranges; still there are many common factors. First and foremost is the physical fitness of the troops, the rugged terrain, steep climbs, long treks, extreme weather, disrupted wireless communication, primitiveness of the area, all these factors combine to make a firing unit small in number with an aim to occupy high nodal points. Shoulder fire anti-aircraft missiles are ideal weapon platform, guns or cannons at that height requires heavy logistics and even then lacks the lethality. Stingers in Afghan conflict brought a military revolution; it all of a sudden made the aircraft look more vulnerable than at any other stage in history.

### **Kargil Conflict**

During Kargil conflict, independent shoulder fired SAM Batteries were deployed, one AD Battery was also deployed for the protection of Skardu air field and city. IAF started flying close to LOC from 10 May 1999 onwards. Kargil was also the first major helicopter warfare between the two countries. In mountainous terrain the passage of early warning information regarding own helicopters to the isolated SA Missile posts without revealing the secrecy of the mission remains feather in cap for the SCR Regiments. Early warning regarding Indian aircraft were collected from the ground observers, from infantry outposts through the quickest possible means and in same instance was passed to own AD posts. A close co-ordination between Signals and AD was achieved.

*On May 12, an IAF helicopter was fired upon near the most forward-based Pakistani positions overlooking Kargil and landed uneventfully with a damaged rotor. !at hostile act prompted Air Headquarters to place Western Air Command, the IAF unit responsible for the Jammu and Kashmir sectors, on heightened alert and to establish quick-reaction aircraft launch facilities at the IAF's*

*northernmost operating locations at Air Force Stations Srinagar and Avantipur.*

550 Light Air Defence (Missile) Battery was deployed at Buniyal Sector whereas a detachment (one JCO and eight soldiers) of 548 SAM Battery participated in the conflict and remained deployed at Pando Feature

**479 Light (I) Missile Battery** with one troop took active part in Kargil (Operation Koh Paima). It shot down enemy aircraft including 1 x MIG-27 fighter, 1 x MIG-21 fighter, 2 x MI-24 gunship helicopters and one MI-17 helicopter.

Havildar Basharat Ali was deputed as SAM Post Comd, Mumtaz Post in Tanveer Sector, Kargil. On 27 May 1999 at stand-to timings he observed four enemy aircraft approaching from east. Under hostile artillery fire he moves to next ridge line and engaged MIG-21 falling within the range of his SAM. The SAM successfully hit the jet and the debris fell close to the post, which was later retrieved and is still held with the unit. N/Sub Basharat Ali (retd) was awarded **Tumgha-e-Jurraat**.

Naik Talib Hussain, and Gunner Shafaqat Ali, were deputed as SAM Post Commander and No 2 at Badar Base, Kargil respectively. On 27 May 1999, an IAF MIG-27 attacked the post, on Lance Hav Talib Hussain's orders Gunner Shafaqat Ali engaged one of the aircraft and resultantly the MIG was completely destroyed. The pilot of the aircraft Naji Keta bailed out and was taken as POW by infantry troops. Naik Talib Hussain and Gunner Shafaqat Ali were awarded **Tumgha-e-Jurraat** in recognition of their achievement.

Havildar Nasir Ali Shah, was appointed SAM Post Commander at Iqbal Post in Gulteri Sector. On 28 May 1999, three Indian MI-24 gunship helicopters approached the post and once these gunships

came in range, Havildar Nasir Ali Shah fired SAM onto one of the gunship resulting into its destruction and the debris fell near the post. Havildar Nasir Ali Shah and Havildar Muhammad Kamal was awarded **Tamgha-e-Jurrat**

A missile troop (479 Independent Air Defence Battery) was deployed in infantry brigades area of responsibility. Troop concentrated at “Dunsum” and on 19 May 1999 moved by road to Pune. On 20 May the missile troop was task to send one missile detachment to Rasheed Base by a helicopter. On arrival, the detachment met Captain Haseeb (Shaheed) 11 Northern Light Infantry Regiment and Captain Shehryar ex 133 Radar Control Gun Regiment. Captain Shehryar was assigned the responsibility of post commander. The Missile section comprised of Naik Majid Ali, Lance Naik Muhammad Akram and Operator Missile Obaidullah. On 21 May at 0600 hours, while the missile troop was in Stand-To position, enemy launched an air raid consisting of two flights of jet aircraft. The missile detachment was ever vigilant to counter it. Operator Missile Obaidullah waited for the jet to pass overhead and then instantly he fired. Missile took a dip and then straightened and with a white trail, like an arrow pierced through the ailerons of the jet. Enemy aircraft was damaged but managed to escape.

The second missile was fired by Naik Majid Ali from the same post but now enemy resorted to high attitude bombing. The detachment alongwith Captain Shehryar moved forward to Jamil Post. The post was held by Northern Light Infantry Regiment. Captain Jamal alongwith a section of Northern Light Infantry were deployed at Jamil post. During the war, logistics support i.e. ammunition and ration supply was the great concern of the command posts. Apart from performing the duties on Infantry role the detachment also called Artillery fire of 130 millimetre Artillery Gun and 105 millimetre Mortar and performed the duties of Artillery observer. During the Kargil war no less than half a dozen missiles were fired

from Jamil post on enemy aircraft. Troops remained deployed for more than five months at Kargil, the war ended in October 1999 and this troop reached back to peace location.

In June 1999, during Kargil Conflict, all air defence resources of 4 Air Defence Division were deployed as per operational task. Janbaz Air Defence Batteries were also activated.

### **Pakistan Navy's Breguet Atlantic – August 1999**

At 11:17 am on 10 August 1999, two Indian Air Force MIGs scrambled from the Naliya to intercept the Pakistan Navy Atlantic Aircraft Flying within Pakistan Air Space. Lead pilot locked on and fired a Russian built R-60 air to air missile at the Atlantique. The infrared homing missile flew straight and level to the port (left side) engine of the Pakistani Navy aircraft and exploded. The aircraft went out of control, spiralling down and crashing at about 11:30 am. All sixteen personnel including five officers onboard were martyred. The debris lay on both sides of the International Border in Rann of Kutch. It was a hostile act by IAF. The incident was a revenge sought and an extension of an embarrassment taken by The Indian Armed forces during Kargil Conflict, once Pakistan shot down two Indian fighter aircrafts on 28 May 1999.

On receiving the report, the Air Defence Brigade was ordered to take up position ensuring that no intrusion from India occurs. **104 Lt AD Regt** and **147 Lt AD Regt** were stationed at Karachi and were the first one to be ordered to reach the site. One RBS Battery of 147 Lt AD was to be heli-lifted. To augment the air defence one gun battery was also ordered to be in position. Lieutenant Colonel Tariq Butt was the Commanding Officer 104 Lt AD, he narrates. *I received orders at 1700 hours 10 August 1999 to move one Gun Battery to Jatti and be responsible for the Air Defence of the crash*



*site forthwith. After necessary preliminaries, I issued Operational Orders for P Battery to move ASAP. Major Aamir Bangash left Malir Cantonment at 0300 hours 11 August 1999 and reached Musaaafir Khana (Concentration Area) near Sir Creek (Jatti) at 0715 hours 11 August 1999 and got deployed with full compliments by 1100 hours the same day. Fully cognizant of the fact that Air Defence largely depends on the warning system communications. I made two copies of signal instructions, one each for the Missile Battery and own Gun Battery and stuffed it personally in the uniform shirt of my Battery Commander telling him specifically to ensure communication with AADC before commencing any other activity. These signal instructions were never communicated to the Missile Battery concerned as they never met’.*

**530 Missile Battery ex 147 Lt AD Regt** was being commanded by Major Akhtar Ali, ‘I was sitting in the regimental offices to make a civil call, it was almost 2200 hours when Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Tajammal Hasnain walked in and briefed me on the situation. I gave necessary verbal orders to my battery and by mid night reached Naval Base as per instructions. We after necessary briefing which included ‘carrying along as much water as possible’ we boarded three Sea Kings. I, had Captain Ansari with me, six operators RBS-70 Missile alongwith two launchers and two Anza heat-seeking missiles alongwith four operators. We landed after much hovering around by pilots at Jati where the infantry brigade (Brigadier Haris) was already in position alongwith PN Special Forces. Early in the morning, I got a clear picture of the event. After the shooting down of own aircraft, PN had responded quickly and one Mistral SAM detachment of them was already in position at the crash site. Lieutenant Colonel Nazir of 60 Punjab regiment and his six soldiers also became part of the army quick response team. We were again heli-lifted by Army Aviation’s Pumas, and after few minutes of flying we were landed at the crash site.; PN sailors

*welcome us. The area was all marshy, void of any vegetation. It was part of the sea as during high tide the entire site was submerged and this cycle last around the clock; we put our missiles in operational mode , we were further informed that yesterday PN had fired a Mistral on an Indian jet but it missed thus we did not expect any further air violation from them '.*

Within an hour after landing, (1345 Hours 11 August, 1999), the Battery was fully operational. The three transport helicopters (MI-17) of India flying westwards, towards the Sir Creek were picked up by Captain Ansari and he alerted the missile firers. RBS70 is a SAM missile in which the firer has to keep the target aligned through his optics and missile follows the firer's path. Range is a critical factor as the missile bursts at range beyond five miles. As the helicopters approached the crash site, Major Akhtar ordered fire. RBS-70 was fired by Havildar Ashraf at long range, the Indian pilots made a hard left and ducked down sharply to almost ground level and survived the attack. An international crisis was narrowly evaded as the latter reports highlighted that an international journalists team was onboard. The missile established own writ as no further Indian helicopters flew close to the international borders.

One of the immediate step undertaken was to establish the communication with the AD Battery. Lieutenant Colonel Tariq was summoned by the AD Commander and told to rush to the crash site with orders to establish an AADC. *I left immediately after necessary operational briefing and reached Jatti by 1545 hours. At about 1600 hours the same day (11 August 1999) after gaining information about the likely method for reaching the crash site, I reached the Launching Pad of hovercraft boats a latest induction in The Pakistan Navy, especially meant for operations in the Sir Creek. Seeing the state of affairs my gut feeling told me to carry whatever rations in cooked form and lots of water. The best, I could get was a load of*

*bakery items (the entire bakery to be precise) from a lone bakery and of course water as much as I could.*

*Pakistan Navy's Commander Bhatti Tbt Bar, was accompanying us on the hover journey. We had four boats included in the expedition. I along with Subedar Yousaf and Havildar Rafique Signal NCO reached the Crash Site at 1715 Hours. The forty odd minutes journey in the creeks was a unique experience including the rise and fall of water levels and the bumpy jumpy ride put together (sometimes the jump use to be as high as 8 to 10 feet alone). Commander Bhatti commuted the distance to the crash site jumping down the airboat time and again to drag the boats out of the damned marsh whenever stuck. Strange sort of creatures (lizard fish) use to come out in millions which gave us a quiver every time we saw them. I distributed the bakery items and water amongst Air Defence and infantry elements equally. By now the relief operations had started. An MI-8 flew in for change of troops, and brought some rations, the pilot offered me a ride back home but I choose to stay a little more to brief the relievers, establish communication and head back on the Hoverboats. Commander Bhatti kept yelling at the top of his voice to hurry as the water level may go down, I thought that these were just some warning shots by the former to expedite things, but these were not false alarms, this we learnt in the next 5 to 6 hours of our stranded journey in the creeks.*

*A little late after sunset we left the crash site, Commander Bhatti was truly worried on the account. As luck would have it the water level started dropping and went so low that we lost the grandeur site of the sea and now we were travelling in a narrow bay. At precisely 0100 hours 12 August 1999, the water level rose and The Creeks turned into an ocean, Commander Bhatti switched on the GPS fixed the bearing of the launching PAD and we made a rush towards home bank. It started raining heavily and the visibility dropped down to*

*zero. We were near but yet so far away. We were received by Major Aamir Bangash at P Battery location at 0230 hours. '*

530 Missile Battery ex 147 Lt AD Regt remained deployed for a month long in the creeks. Pakistan filed a lawsuit against India at the International Court of Justice on 21 September 1999. It sought about \$60 million compensation from India. While the cost of the plane was about \$35 million, the rest of the money sought was for compensation of the families. On 21 June 2000, the 15 judge bench headed by Gilbert Guillaume of France ruled with a 14-2 verdict - that the court had no jurisdiction in the matter.

## *Chapter Nine*

### **Army Air Defence in Millennium**

Dawn of new millennium was a matter of joy for all ranks. The hype and anticipation created by the media over the new millennium had caught every ones imagination. The much talked about event was the Y2K bug, which will erase all computer data and computers will stop working. Computers were making their presence felt, every regiment had them, although there was no central networking. Offices had desktop and laptops were still a novelty, few officers had mobile telephones and among the troops it was a rarity. USBs still had to make an entry into everyday life. In the end nothing happened and life in AD Regiments was as usual. Pakistan itself underwent a transition when military took over the control of the country through a bloodless coup. General Pervaiz Musharraf took over the helm of the country first as Chief Executive and later as President of Pakistan. He was commissioned in 36 LAA in 1964 and acted as adjutant for a brief period before joining SSG.

The routine in regiments was more or less the same as it was half a century ago, physical training in the morning, office work starting at 0730 hours, tea break at 1030, office pack up at 1400 hours, lunch in the mess and then evening games at 1700 hours. Within the regiment on any given day it was standard to carryout, gun and vehicle maintenance, training classes, promotion cadres, inspection of stores, lectures, declamation contests, audits, disposal of cases, explanations, leave issues and occasional military police report on someone driving beyond speed limits; overall it was a happy, contended, healthy and professional life. The fact remains that the pattern of working, the dress, the culture and above all the mind set was still rooted in the conventional warfare of WWII era. There was too much courtesy in everyday working life pattern,

practically there were no security walls around the regiments or messes, everyone was being trusted whole heartedly and treated with hospitality. There was a genuine apprehension about the small arms handling in the regiments, the guards at Quarter Guard had the rifles but the ammunition box was always with the guard commander who would keep it sealed and close to his heart. On courses the weapon of officer (Rifle G-3) was transported by his batman during long train journeys.

New technological innovations were in the market, and they were slowly and gradually changing the life pattern, the ATMs and credit cards were the two major such items. The COAS and President General Musharraf's decision to allot a residential plot to every field officer was a much welcome step, it took away the financial worries and as such an improved lifestyle. Perhaps the abolition of the Batman in the army was the most far reaching decision of its time, it had multiple dimensions but in the end the national and stark realities advocated its abolition. There were no less than forty thousand soldiers performing as Batman and they were being counted as bayonet strength which was a far higher professional elevation of them due to absence of regular military mindset. They had become a culture of their own; an unofficial corps of batman was thriving. They were required and useful in the past but a modern, professional, smart, and adaptive to modern trends was the requirement of new millennium military. Batman are now part of history, they were once an integral member of an officer's life joining him as he reports to the parent regiment and soon a bond develops between the officer and his batman that last often to retirement of both.

### **Kashmir -2000**

In April 2000 one troop of 145 LAD Regiment was tasked to provide Air Defence protection to units deployed in Azad Kashmir.

Enemy was trying to capture some area in Azad Kashmir and started violating Line of Control. This troop was given responsibility to deploy their missile detachment in Bagh and Kel sector of Azad Kashmir. They were total 27 soldiers under Command Lieutenant Mehraj (Now Major). After reaching Muzafarabad one week acclimatization time was given to troop and one week of missile refresher cadre was organized. The detachments were sent to established seven Air Defence posts at Kabran Wali, Mahmood Gali, Bisa and Chiri Kot in Bagh sector and Kel Shanda and Phulwai in Kel sector. These posts were meant to provide protection to own Mujahid and artillery regiments. The troop along with the missile and equipment managed to reach respective posts in 48 hours. Detachment climbed difficult mountains and were able to take the missile at difficult heights. These men of Fizza-Al-Javi faced difficulties with courage and dignity and effectively counter enemy ground and air attacks. After 14 months of deployment in mountainous terrain of Azad Kashmir the troop reached back at Garrison on 1 July 2001.

## **9/11**

Deliberation on the future warfare at all level is a regular exercise which all commanders indulge, thus study periods, war games, field exercises, field firing are an integral part of army life. Military hypothesis are based upon logic and rationality, in which a conflict requires some time to mature giving ample opportunities to resolve it without resorting to violence. The events and after effects of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 in New York and Washington neither gave any time nor allowed a rational approach to understand it in totality. World peace in short became a hostage to the terrorists, militants, fundamentalists and politicians, the sufferers were the innocent and common people. The worst hit was Pakistan, on its West; the Afghanistan was the sole target of the sole super power in the

world, USA. On its East, India the arch enemy suffered a moral and political blow when its parliament was attacked and as usual it put the blame on Pakistan and amassed its forces threatening Pakistan's sovereignty. Army Air Defence regiments, brigades and divisions were deployed in response to any Indian misadventure at air fields, bridges, strategic installations, with field and armoured formations. On Western borders there was no threat to Pakistan's air space for the time being.

Lieutenant General Khateer Hasan Khan was the commander AAD. The deployment on Eastern Front was carried out under heavy fog which was unusual for the season, it lasted for a fortnight. AAD regiments were deployed in their operational areas before the fog dissipated. The tension with India lasted till summer of 2003. AAD was well prepared in every sense, it had the most sophisticated weapon system, a combination of light and medium guns, shoulder fired missiles, long and short range radars and importantly a state of art control and reporting system. Manpower was well trained, highly motivated and professionally led.

## **Escalation 2001-02**

Army and Army Air Defence are always ready to react within a short time; however the soldiers and officers as a human do have certain requirement including leave. Thus on any given time, a certain number of troops are allowed to proceed on leave and recreation. The reserve formations which are deployed in the rear of the country are primarily rotated to give troops breathing time. Formations deployed in the front have a higher ratio of manning and as such are ready to be in action within hours. The nature of 2001 escalation was such that formations in rear were also called up to strengthen the Eastern Front. 43 LAA was deployed at Quetta and it remained deployed for well over a year and half, covering over 3000 Kilometres of distance in between.



*It was night 25/26 December 2001 at about 0400 hours in the morning when Lt Nabeel Afzal performing as Duty Officer heard an emergent telephone call from GSO-II Operations, "to move the unit 'Teer Ba Hadaf' to operational area as soon as possible. Lt Nabeel Afzal, immediately informed Major Ijaz Ahmed, the then A/CO of the regiment about the situation. All the officers were called immediately in the unit lines and started preparing for move. All persons were called back from leave. At 0500 hrs, a coordination conference was held at 0600 hours by A/CO and formal Warning Orders were given. What to leave and what to take along from stores on such a short notice by each subunit, especially keeping in view the winter season was a major decision . Batteries started their move at about 1330 hrs on 26 December 2001, towards their first destination Panu Aqil. . In first phase, all the convoys move to Sibbi, to DMJ (Dera Murad Jamali) in the second phase and finally to Panu Aqil in the third phase. R and Q Batteries had to provide AD protection to the Division Convoys enroute as well as during detraining and entraining; they reached Panu Aqil at 1630 hours on 28 December 2001.*

*Adequate AD protection was provided during move of Division from Panu Aqil to Pattoki at entraining and detraining station and during move of eight trains' enroute. On 13 January 2002, regiment reached Changa Manga. The deployment of the regiment at Changa Manga was not conventional due to presence of high trees. The SAMs detachments were attached with division and brigades deployed at Azad Kashmir Natar Missile post established by detachments (43 Lt AD) was hit by Indian Anti IR Missile Milan on 12 June 2002, without causing any damage. The pieces of Milan were later collected and are kept as souvenir in the unit. Havildar Shahbaz Ahmed was slightly injured during this incident and remained deaf and dumb for one day but soon reported back on post after treatment at Regimental Aid Post (RAP).*

The regiment finally reached back to Quetta at 0330 hrs at 23 June 03 in a special military train. This was the longest deployment in last ten years. When a regiment is away from its home base as was in this case, the life in cantonment also undergoes a transition, almost entire cantonment gives an empty look although certain administrative units are always present.

Over a period of time and basing upon war experiences and exercises, it was duly recognised that a state of art ‘surveillance, control and reporting’ is the very heart of our entire air defence system. In 1987, digitization was initiated and revived in 1998 and pursued wholeheartedly after approval of funds in 2001. A joint venture with private firms was initiated and it took years but in the end, the desired objectives have been achieved. During the escalation with India, the system was put into action, FAADCs and CRCPs were established at Rahim yar Khan, Sargodha, Aimanabad, Lahore, Gujranwala, Multan, Bahawalpur , in short the entire eastern border was under surveillance.

### **Army Strategic Force Command**

Pakistan successfully carried out nuclear explosion on 28 May 1998 and it not only retorted the Indian dominance, rather it has brought back the power of balance in the favour of Pakistan. This capability was not achieved overnight rather it has a history of our struggle, collective wisdom, dedication; it speaks of our heritage and mental faculty. Army Air Defence protected these nation saving installations since their very inceptions in mid-seventies. Dedicated anti-aircraft brigade , the biggest brigade in the history of Pakistan Army was raised, comprising of anti-aircraft regiments and infantry regiment and special services group (SSG) troops. These installations were put under one command in post May 1998, exclusive Army Air Defence Regiments were raised as the integral regiments of new command.

**159 Light Air Defence (SAM) Regiment** was raised on 5 June 2001 (12 Rabi-ul-Awal 1422 Hijri) undercommand Lieutenant Colonel Sultan Maqsood at Murree. This newly raised regiment took birth by re-organising three Air Defence Independent Batteries i.e 475, 476 and 479 AD (I), which were raised in March 1987, February 1987 and May 1987 respectively, therefore, the history of unit is traced back to 1987. These three independent missile batteries had played a key and vital role in the Afghan War and later in Siachen conflict.

**156 Light Air Defence Regiment.** Army Strategic Force Command (ASFC) was raised as the custodian of strategic assets of Pakistan and it was a unique honour of this Regiment to be raised as **“The First AD Regiment of Army Strat Forces Command”**. Lieutenant Colonel (Brigadier) Malik Muhammad Abrar was the first commanding officer, unit was raised on 2 August 2002 in two phases. In first phase one battery and regimental headquarters were raised and in phase II which completed on 30 July 2004 two more batteries were raised. Lieutenant Colonel Abrar was given the task of evolving the AD concepts for the ASFC. There has been significant evolution in this concepts since then. This regiment infact acted as motherboard for other regiments.

**157 Light Air Defence Regiment** was raised at Jarrar Camp on 9 April 2004 by Lieutenant Colonel Mumtaz Malik . regiment soon moved down south and underwent extensive training being part of Army Strategic Force South. Regiment excelled in small arms firing and won many trophies from the formation. Unit was declared **“Best Air Defence Training Unit”** in Army Strategic Force Command for year 2010.

## **AL-Mouz-2006**

One major step in self-reliance was achieved in 2006, when indigenously built AL-Mouz armoured personal carrier built by Heavy Industries Taxila (HIT) was handed over to the Army Air Defence. These APCs are fitted with SAMs and have a crew of four. They have increased the lethality of our regiments supporting armoured divisions. General Ehsan Ul Haq chairman Joint Chief of Staff Committee was the chief guest at the ceremony. It is worth noting that General Ehsan himself was commissioned and later commanded 19 (SP) LAA Regiment.

## **Farewell to Arms, 14.5 mm AA Machine Gun**

Army Air Defence underwent a doctrinal transition; it was decided to have composite Air Defence Regiments, with more reliance upon missiles rather than on guns alone. Thus Gun-Missiles Regiments and SAM Regiments emerged; the existing organisation in terms of manpower and equipment were modified. Gun and missile both have their advantages and limitations, perhaps the shelf life of a missile is the major drawback when it is compared with a gun, on the other hand, the kill ratio of a missile is far higher than a gun round. Weapon upgradation was initiated, 57mm gun system along with its tactical, fire control radars (Type-5) and Fire Control Computer Type-59 were the first gun systems to be upgraded, new Fire Control Radar 702A was inducted and it increased the lethality of aging guns. Similarly, 37mm Guns were also upgraded by incorporating electric firing mechanism, thereby increasing rate of fire. This upgradation continued throughout the decade. 14.5 mm Anti-Aircraft Machine Gun was given a grand farewell on its active retirement from the service in 2007. It had served with distinction in the LAA Regiments for well over forty years, a truly classic AA weapon with dual lethality in ground role. To a great extent guns

seldom gets retired due to fatigue , it is that a better gun replaces them with better range, accuracy and higher rate of fire.

### **Militancy and Counter Militancy 2005-2020**

Pakistan's efforts to eliminate, capture and rehabilitate the militants and their supporters who have fled from the Afghanistan along with the Al Qaeda were met with stiff resistance in the tribal areas. Osama Bin Laden the man perceived to be the brain behind the wave of terror across the globe was suspected of hiding in these tribal areas. Tribal and troubled belt of Pakistan comprised of seven Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Each tribal area was a political agency created during the British Raj days to have a buffer zone between British India and the Russia.

The wave of militancy and terror in earnest started from 2005, the Militia and Scouts present in FATA were reinforced with regular army regiments, these regiments after a year were rotated. The militants also established their foot holds in Provincially Administrative Tribal areas (PATA) which includes Swat, Chitral in KPK and Bugti areas in Balochistan. The causes of violence in KPK and Balochistan had different roots but still they posed a threat to national economy and integrity.

Army Air Defence officers were posted in Frontier Corps of KPK and Balochistan to fulfil the deficiency of officers, the AD itself had little role to play as there was no threat from air. The AD regiments were thus task to provide security cover to the cantonments. In 2009, Lieutenant General Ashraf Saleem ,Commander Army Air Defence put forward the proposal in the Corps Commanders Conference at GHQ, to employ AAD Regiments in ground role in the counter-militancy operations. Infantry in such terrain and environment is both the king and queen of the battlefield but other arms can supplement

it after undergoing strenuous training; this was the theme of AAD being employed.

The training regime of recruits in AAD have basic military segment during which they are given proficiency in physical fitness, small arms firing, navigation, map reading, perhaps the only thing lacking is firing of infantry weapons including mortars. Under the training regime for the AD Regiments to be inducted in FATA and PATA, it was planned to put the entire regiment for a strenuous 4-6 weeks of training, which includes repelling, small arms firing at night, establishing of check posts, clearing of IEDs, house cordon and search drills, actions in case of being ambush, unarmed combat drills, drills for helicopter move, repelling from helicopters, in short everything less Para- drops.

**147 Lt AD (SP)** was the first regiment to be inducted in counter militancy operations. On 12 August 2010, the unit was ordered to move to Dera Ismail Khan / Taank as *Field Component South, Special Support Group (Displaced Persons) 1 Corps for Displaced Persons* during Operation Rah-e-Nijat, thus became the 1<sup>st</sup> Air Defence unit employed in Operational Area on Infantry role, where it performed its duties till 28 March 2011. The regiment got deployed under command Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Shahid.

The pattern of induction of Air defence Regiments in infantry role consisted of having a Pre-Induction Training (PIT) Phase of two weeks in which all manpower is recalled to regiment, guards and duties adjusted. A Pre Induction training of eight weeks during which physical standards are improved, handling of small arms, firing and minor tactics. In 2010, it included collective training at Chak-23 in Bahawalpur, followed by four weeks of collective training at Khairpur Tamewali during which heavy weapon firing was conducted. In the end before the regiment is inducted

a transitional phase training at Pabbi during which all battle procedures and weapon firing conducted at fast pace. Thus in 2010, 145 AD Regiment deployed at Bahawalpur underwent a year of training before it moved into operational area at Taank.

*Low Intensity Conflict is a bloody, steady but slow & strenuous and witty war to be fought with nerves. There is no Forming Up Place, no Start Line and neither any time & space bondage in unfolding of enemy actions. It is fought beyond convention. Enemy has broken out, you ought to seek him out. Your personal weapons is the ultimate companion. Check your weapons and make them ready to fire / fire back in the quickest possible time. Close in by skillful use of field craft, Close Quarter Battle and fire back with all avail guns of varying caliber and ensure you see yourself the complete destruction of miscreants.*<sup>180</sup>

*147 Lt AD (SP) was replaced by 145 Lt AD (SP), later 5 Lt AD, 6 Lt AD, 19 Lt AD (SP), 20 Med, 36 Lt AD, 41 Med, 44 Lt AD (SP), 52 Med, 58 Med, 67 Lt AD (SP), 74 Lt AD, 88 Lt AD, 95 Lt AD, 96 LOMAD, 98 RCG, 100 Lt AD, 101 Lt AD, 103 Lt AD, 126 Lt AD, 127 Med, 144 Lt AD (SP), 145 Lt AD (SP), 148 Lt AD (SP), 151 Lt AD (SP), 153 Lt AD (SP), 155 Lt AD (SP), have served and are deployed at Chitral, Swat, North and South Waziristan areas.*

Initially the deployment created a debate and there were apprehensions among the officers, however now the situation is such that regiments are eager to be selected for this tenure of duty. The sole reason is that it is pride for every soldier and officer of every generation to serve in the most adverse environment. At present, when so much action was being taking place and yet one being not part of it is a matter of a lifelong regret. Officers and men from Army Air Defence are serving in SSG and Army Aviation, as a volunteer. The positive aspect of AAD Regiments taking part in operation in

<sup>180</sup> Order of the Day, 145 Air Defence Regiment .

ground role is in the fact that it puts the officers and men in peak physical conditions, it gives them confidence when they fire small arms day and night, they are proud of themselves that they can endure such long marches and fatigue. AAD as an arm have this limitation that, live firing of Anti aircraft guns and missile cannot take place weekly within a regiment, thus troops have certain fields to excel (radar, communication) but it is this role which brings the best out of them. This training also have a direct impact on their primary role as Air Defence, the bondage which develops during hard times is much stronger than that of peace time alone. An entire new culture has emerged within AAD, a culture to exert physically, to play sports, to be more aggressive, to endure for long. Deployment at FATA and PATA have broaden the horizon of all ranks.

Air Defence Regiments performs multiple tasks in the operational areas, they man checkpoints, carryout patrolling, clearing of areas, maintaining peace and order, facilitating the rehabilitation of the affected people, initiate programmes to win heart and mind of local which includes organising sports and cultural shows, reconstruction of schools and dispensaries.



## **Army Air Defence; 2020 and Beyond**

Present day threat is as real as it was at the very inception of our country; in 1947-48 the main cause was Kashmir and it still is. The two wars and equal number of small wars with India sets the historical hypothesis of not ruling out another one at any time. All wars and conflicts with India and Afghanistan started with the air power; Rann of Kutch being the sole exception. The pattern of air conflict remained identical in 1965 and 1971 Wars, PAF attacked Indian air bases, in retaliation own air bases also received enemy attacks. Thus defence of air base was the most important in both wars and so will it remain in any future conflict. Our bridges were few in both wars, they have multiplied in numbers and so have our vital economic, agricultural, and communication hubs. The air wars in post 1971 War , includes 1973 Arab-Israel War, 1979 Falklands War, 1979-1988 Iraq –Iran War, and importantly the 1990 Gulf War and 2002 Iraq Invasion. In all these air conflicts the air force attracts the world attention and as such the role of air defence is paramount, an enemy aircraft shot down is a great morale booster. More importantly the morale of the cities and nation rises with the thunder of own anti-aircraft guns firing and enemy aircraft falling down amidst them.

Our field formations alone will decide the fate of the future war, as the fate of the last two wars was ultimately decided on ground by the armoured brigades and infantry divisions. Kashmir the very cause of conflict however is a pure infantry battlefield. Gunships have never been employed in the past wars for the reason that they were not on the inventory of belligerents. Indians inducted MI-35 in 1982 and now they have also inducted Apaches, we also have Cobras with us, they were inducted in 1985. Thus helicopters are now very much part of the battle scene and as such the importance of Friend and Foe is much more than in the past. Enemy gunship makes the presence of anti-aircraft guns including 14.5mm a necessity at

the forward edge of the battle. The combination of shoulder fired and man packed surface to air missiles along with rapid firing anti-aircraft guns will ensure that every flight of enemy is as hazardous as it can be.

Early warning and its passage to the gun and missile posts is the fundamental and cardinal stone of army air defence; it is the most delicate too.

Thus in the 2014 Army Air Defence Doctrine, the induction of having an effective, multi layered, long range air defence capability was laid down. It was perhaps the only link missing in the otherwise a very sound and lethal Army Air Defence Regime Change.

### **Induction of FM-90 ESHORADS**

Pakistan Army inducted **FM-90** an extended short range surface to air missile in 2015, the missile system was first displayed on 23 March 2015 and its first firing was conducted in May 2015. General Raheel Sharif witnessed the firing display at Sonmiani Karachi. The exercise marked the culmination of the induction training of the new system. All weather, surface to air missile FM 90, with a capability to engage aerial target including cruise missiles, drones and air to surface guided missiles can operate under adverse electronic counter measures (ECM) environments. FM- 90 missile system has the ability to engage multiple types of target at one time. The system enhances Pakistan's air defence capability both in range and accuracy. Addressing the officers and troops of Army Air Defence, COAS appreciated the training standards achieved. He also emphasised the importance of Air Defence in today's warfare and the need for continuous up-gradation of equipment, as well as training to defeat a wide threat spectrum.

## **Al- Bayza**

**2019** is an historic year for Pakistan Military and Army Air Defence. The decisions taken and approved in 2014 for the upgradation of the own air defence were put into field and new weapon systems aimed at enhancing the lethality and deterrence at medium and high altitude were put into operations.

Induction of Long Range Weapon System (LRWS) has afforded AAD enhanced reach and lethality. Since 2017 beside well laid absorption methodology, operationalisation of LRWS has been vigorously pursued. While evaluating best practices of contemporary armies, a comprehensive taring module was formulated specifically for LRWS, including crystallisation of employment concepts, pre-induction inland training and training abroad at manufacturers' premises. All this logically leads to practise firing as the culmination point of induction.

In January 2019, the biggest exercise of Army Air Defence was conducted in which the entire doctrine was put on a test. 48 Air Defence Regiments took part in this exercise. The exercise itself was conceptualised on a hadith of Holy Prophet (PBUH) 'prepare to meet them (enemy) with much strength as you can afford, verily, the strength lies in archery'.<sup>181</sup> Bayza was the name of the bow used by Holy Prophet (PBUH) and as such the Biennial AD fire and exercise was named 'Exercise Al Bayza'.

The exercise was set up in a realistic scenario; all undercommand formations took part in it. From a regiment level the battle procedures were initiated and practiced in first phase which lasted from 1 November -10 December 2018. Tactical move and deployment was carried out under operational environment in second phase (12-21 December 2018). Thus gradually the higher formations were

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<sup>181</sup> Sahih Muslim.

integrated into the exercise, communication; early warning and reporting were all practiced. The culminating point was the field firing at Sonmiani Ranges (25 December 2018- 10 January 2019). ‘All participating troops will be made to practice deployment drills procedures under ambit of Comprehensive Layered and Integrated Air Defence (CLIAD)’.<sup>182</sup>

Pakistan Army Air Defence displayed the newest induction to its air defence systems at firing ranges near Karachi on 9-11 January 2019.<sup>183</sup> Firing by all air defence weapon systems was the culminating event of the two-week long Al Bayza-2019 Exercise. Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa and Chief of Air Staff (CAS) Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan, Lieutenant General Hamood Uz Zaman Commander Army Air Defence witnessed the firepower display. The hallmark of the event was the first-ever fire by the recently-inducted LY-80 Long Range Air Defence Weapon System. Induction of LY-80 has realised the concept of a comprehensive, layered and integrated air defence capability with enhanced lethality. While interacting with officers and troops, the COAS congratulated Army Air Defence for the successful display of the military’s firepower capability. General Qamar said, *LY-80 has greatly enhanced the air defence capability of Army Air Defence while also strengthening it at national level along with PAF, the overall custodian of the defence of Pakistan air space.* Air Chief Marshal Mujahid also congratulated Pakistan Army for induction of the LY-80, saying that it has reinforced Pakistan’s overall air defence capability.

## **LY-80**

The LY-80 is also known as HQ-16A in China and is a product of China Aerospace Science and Technology Corps (CASC) and can

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<sup>182</sup> Lieutenant General Hamood Zaman Commander AAD.

<sup>183</sup> <https://ispr.gov.pk/press-release-detail.php?id=5144> No.PR-12/2019-ISPR.

hit targets of an altitude 400 to 10,000 metres. The mobility in the air defence system is achieved by placing the LY-80 into an 8x8 truck in which the command and control is also stationed. LY-80 has been described as a 'ready to fire' system which can take down modern fighter jets, cruise missiles, and drones. With 40 kilometres range, the weapon system has the capability of engaging as many as six targets simultaneously at a height of 50,000 feet. The system has search radar with a range of 150 km and guidance radar with a range of 100 kilometres. The missile can destroy aircraft and cruise missiles that are flying at an altitude of 15 metre to 18 kilometres.<sup>184</sup>

**Pulwama Incident.** On 14 February 2019, a convoy of Indian troops was a target of a suicide attack resultantly over fifty soldiers were killed; as usual India put the blame on Pakistan. The political situation in India with general elections only weeks ago made the incident a winning slogan for ruling Indian political party.

Army Air Defence Command keeping an eye on these developments very wisely deployed its long range firing equipment along the eastern borders more specifically in the Kashmir area. Resultantly when on 26 February 2019, IAF crossed the Kashmir skies and intruded into own air space, they were picked up by own army radars and it was mainly due to the deployment of own missiles that enemy was compelled to fly at higher altitude, dropping payload in uninhabited areas before they fled. Very next day PAF struck with a professional plan and not only shot down an Indian aircraft in their own space but also a MIG-21 which crashed within Pakistan; pilot Wing Commander Abhinandan was captured and later released on 1 March 2019. Army Air Defence was the first to response by deploying its latest long range missile systems in defence of own air

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<sup>184</sup> <https://www.defenceiq.com/air-land-and-sea-defence-services/news/pakistan-strengthens-low-to-medium-altitude-air>.

space.<sup>185</sup> The induction of LY-80 thus proved a very timely induction as it has put a very strong deterrent on any intruder.

**On tactical level**, the actual battle will be fought and won on ground by our field and armoured formations, the recent induction of AH-64E Apache attack helicopters in Indian Air Force<sup>186</sup> once again brings the focus on low level anti-aircraft weapon systems. Indians will soon be having 22 of these Apaches along with a dozen Hind Mi-35 which they inducted in 1984. The future air threat is thus multiple, it comprise of jet aircraft attacking our airbases and naval installations at low level, night bombing of our economic assets and a continuous duel in the field between own air defenders and enemy gunships. Our own airforce is much superior to enemy in technology, morale and tactics, more so PAF had inducted state of art air defence equipment as part of their own air defence squadrons. Thus Army Air Defence unlike last two wars will now be more concentrated in support of field formations.

Identification of friend and foe is a very important aspect in the future war; it requires a good knowledge of enemy aircraft and gunships. Today we have a state of art control and reporting system in Army Air Defence yet the importance of ground observer cannot be overruled. These ground observers will play an important role in passing information at regimental level, communication system in any war is bound to break or lapse momentarily therefore instant judgement by the unit commanders depends upon the local early warning information. Missile have brought a revolution in military affairs more so in air war, these shoulder packed missiles can take a heavy toll of enemy aircraft and specifically cargo and armed helicopters. The rapid firing 14.5mm Gun with its rate of fire is an ideal companion to the missiles in the field.

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185 <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/448266-pakistan-deploys-new-air-defence-system-at-loc>

186 <https://thediplomat.com/2019/07/first-four-ah-64e-apache-attack-helicopters-arrive-in-india/>

## **Present**

The situation is still very tense especially in the aftermath of Indian decision to revoke special status of Kashmir in July 2019. No country wants war, as a modern war among nuclear belligerents is bound to cause devastation beyond comprehension. Yet war is a reality and it is bound to happen sooner or later in our region. The importance of Army Air Defence is now much more than ever, the recent events and also in the past highlights that ‘ Air Clashes’ are more deadly than the ground skirmishes. An air fight catches the headlines all over the world, it raises the morale of a nation as it happened on 27 February 2019, thus Army Air Defence is the first to respond and it can win the war even before the start of it.

## *Chapter Ten*

### **School of Army Air Defence 1942-2020**

School of Army Air Defence at Malir Cantonment Karachi, which now stands out as the most distinguished centre of education on air defence was raised as ***School of Anti-Aircraft and Coastal Artillery (AAA&CA)*** in 1941 at Manora (Karachi) and within months moved to the present location. It remained functional throughout the WWII and was disbanded in 1945 and remained so till 1950, when it was reincarnated.

The School of AAA&CA was raised in late 1940 (November 1940) at Manora under the supervision of the lone coastal artillery battery. It was decided in 1939 to equip and strengthen the coastal defence of the India by raising anti-aircraft artillery, chiefly to protect the coast line and seaports at Karachi and Bombay alongwith Madras. Coastal Artillery was a separate branch of artillery and the battery at Manora was raised in 1887. As being coastal gunners they had the expertise of firing on the moving targets thus they were entrusted with the training of the anti-aircraft gunners as well. Initial batch of gunners including officers came from field and anti-tank artillery batteries. Clifton beach on the edge of Karachi was selected as the firing practice area thus it was also known for long as the AA School bus stop. Gunners were housed at Bharatpore Barracks (Karachi Transit Camp) close to the Karachi cantonment railway station; however as the intensity of the war in Burma increased thus Malir Cantonment due to its vastness was opted as the permanent place for the AA School and it remained so till 1947 at the time of independence.

During Burma Campaign, the AA Regiments were raised almost on monthly basis to cope up with the threat. Gunners who were



initially trained at Artillery Centre at Ambala, on posting to the Ack Ack units, the same trained recruits were posted to the Anti-Aircraft Artillery School for a six-eight weeks training on radars, 40mm Bofors and 3.7 inch Guns. Officers after training from Deolai, were also posted to Malir, where not only they raised the Ack Ack regiments but also underwent training on the type. Veteran and experience British artillery officers from field and other branches of artillery acted as the instructors and commanders.

In 1945, the war ended in Asia and with this the disbandment of army also initiated including AA Regiments. These AA regiments were reduced from over thirty to mere four by the beginning of 1947; as such the School of AA artillery was also disbanded. After independence, Pakistan Artillery inaugurated its own school at Nowshehra and a training centre at Attock (Campbelpur); ideally both should have been at the same place. Idea of having a separate institution for training of AA officers was turned down by the Brigadier Harris , then director artillery however his successor Brigadier Morley put forward the suggestion of having a separate school for training of officers and it was finally approved by GHQ in November 1950.

Lieutenant Colonel J.W.Calver was appointed as the first commandant of the Anti-Aircraft Artillery School (AA School), however the contribution of Lieutenant Colonel Pinchard (Brigadier retired) are worth mentioning. The paperwork for formal approval took almost a year, and in this period it was Pinchard who acted as the chief instructor and commandant. Major Donithorn of field artillery was another officer who contributed immensely in the initial days, he was part of the Artillery school at Nowshehar and as such was responsible for initial setting up of the syllabus and publications. Pioneer team also included Major Jamshed, Captain S.M.Aslam and Captain M.A.Ansari. Major Jamshed had the distinction of passing

the gunnery staff from U.K. In 1951, Lieutenant Colonel D.P.O. Reilly assumed the command of the school and Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ansari have the distinction of being the first Pakistani commandant of the school in 1952. The instructors included Major Ijaz Ahmed Khan (Brigadier) Captain Choudhry Abdur Rehman (Major general), Captain A.K.M.Shams Ul Islam (Brigadier) and Captain Iftikhar Muhammad (Major general). School was authorised one Major and three Captains as the instructors, other notables included Lieutenant General Syed Riffaqt who as captain performed the duties of School Adjutant in this period.

Building number 61 (Presently part of UA Branch), Buildings Number 65 (Presently Printing Press), Building Number 51 and 52 (Presently NCO's Students Living) became one of the first class rooms for students. Building number 45 (presently being used as office area of Training Support Regiment) was utilized for officer's mess till 1972. Once the new mess came on ground, it was utilized for school library till 1977. Then this building remained the hub of RPV cell activities till it was renovated and converted into MOQs in 2003 and then subsequently Training Support Regiment office area was established in 2008.

Captain Ayub Lilla (Brigadier retired) served as instructor in the school between 1955-1960, recalls. 'I was newly posted in the school, I had done my basic course and as such basing upon my grading I was posted. Initially, commandant took my interview and tasked me to teach the soldiers and non-commissioned officers in radar, mainly dealing with 3.7 inch gun and mark IV Radar. School was in barracks, we had three of them, in which we had three classrooms, one barrack for the instructors' office as well as that of commandant. Life was tough, as commandant would make frequent visits to the classrooms and later quite a debate would ensue over the contents of the lecture. Thus we made precise and Directing Staff notes to avoid any confusion among the teaching being imparted.'

School location was as such that it was neither too close to the city neither too far. Thus a balance life was in action, student officers living in barracks within the walking distance of their classrooms. Classes starting at 0730 hours and lasting till 1400 hours with a 1 break of half an hour. AA Gunnery was taught mostly verbally and with the help of charts and diagrams, emphasis was on the scientific calculation and as such required high standards of mathematics. From the onset of the School, it became obvious that AA training requires presence of flying aircraft in the close vicinity for any meaningful absorption of the theory. Probably, School's right place was at Mauripur where RPAF aircraft were busy around the clock in flying. In late 1950s with the development of present day Jinnah Airport the gunners got a real opportunity to observe the aircraft in such close range; albeit slow moving.

School syllabus was cumbersome, student officers had to learn three different types of guns (40 mm and 20 mm along with 3.7 inch) however it were the radars which were the most complicated in nature. Grades were gained or lost in the radars and with them to a great extent the careers were also lost. Tactically the emphasis was on the defence of an air base and protection of bridges over rivers. I was the induction of Self Propelled Ack Ack Guns under the American aid programme in 1959-1960 which brought a drastic change in the School teaching and mental outlook. In the same period (1960) heavy anti-aircraft guns along with their radars were declared obsolete and deposited in the ordnance depots.

Socially, the life at school for a student officer was much better off than the past decade; although wooden barracks were still being used as the accommodation and so were the teaching classes. Better pay and foreign courses had enabled the officers to buy motorcycles and as such the distance to Karachi was reduced drastically. Still Malir was a distant place, which shuts off after sunset. There was no

recreation other than the officers club which provided swimming, tennis, squash, billiard and good food. Malir was notorious for its venomous snakes which were often found lying along the windows in officers' residences.

## **Post 1965 War**

*Our Course 35 PMA was passed out a month later. We were twelve officers who were posted to the Ack Ack Artillery, we were given three days leave and then instructed to report direct to SAAA at Malir. I boarded the train Chenab express from Faisalabad and reached Karachi Cantonment Railway Station. In the train was Major Aslam Mahmood Hayat , who was also being posted to SAAA from PMA after its reopening . We were living in the present day 4 Dots Mess, going to SAAA on rented bicycles which were available at Rupees twenty per month. Our course was cut down to ten weeks only. Major Shams U Doha was our chief instructor; he later resigned from army, contested the 1970 General Elections from Islamabad and lost; he later became foreign minister of Bangla Desh. We were taught Chinese 37 mm guns which were a new induction then, also 3.7 inch Heavy Guns and an introduction to radars. Firing practise was carried out on .50 Quad, it was electric operated thus during practice firing the NCO would be keeping one hand on the power battery in order to cut off power in case of any emergency. 12.7 mm Gun was also inducted from China and we carried out firing practice on it.<sup>187</sup>*

In 1967, a case was processed for up gradation of the School to bring it at par with the School of Artillery Nowshera. It took almost two years but the proposal was accepted in 1969 and the Commandant became a full Colonel and for the first time a Chief Instructor was posted alongwith the administrative and teaching staff. Colonel M.D

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<sup>187</sup> Major Retired Arif Hameed 43 LAA.

Qureshi was the first Commandant after up gradation and took over the command on 2 September 1969. The School also got a Mess of its own and accommodation for its students. A LAA Regiment was also placed UC School to provide administrative and training support. School of AA Artillery became an autonomous body under General Headquarter. Commandant, in fact became an advisor to General Headquarter on all matters relating to the organization and induction of new anti-aircraft weapons.

By 1969, the School had sufficient resources and instructors to start off with a more advance course for the JCO's / NCO's. Consequently Long Gunnery Staff Course (LGSC-1) was started on 18 Jan 1969. By the start of 1970, Muslim Countries started sending students to School for training. Arrival of foreign students to the School enabled us to get two single officers' quarters well furnished. The Arab and African students added an international flavor and colour to the academic environment of the school.

**On 1 December 1971**, 311 Independent Light AA Battery was raised from School resources and dispatched to join Headquarter 18 Division in the operational area. Commandant, Colonel Mahmood Aslam Hayat (Major General and GOC AA Command) was appointed Section Commander Thatta – Gadap Sector under Karachi fortress defence. The section was deployed from ; Thatta - Karachi Creek. School deployed 3.7 inch HAA Guns for ground role.

**Post 1971 War**, the AAA School was elevated to the higher scale of TO&E on 27 October 1972. The appointment of Chief Instructor was upgraded to the rank of lieutenant colonel . Following new courses were introduced:-

**ROGC**. This course (Regimental Officers Gunnery Course-1) was introduced for the officers with the service of three years and

above in 1972 and was mandatory for all officers. Its duration was sixteen weeks. Later, it was replaced by the Mid Career Course in 1990s..

**AAMGC.** The School started with the Anti-Aircraft Machine Gun Course for the NCOs on 2 April 1972. This was open for all arms and services. A short duration of six-eight weeks, with a n aim to educate the junior leadership regarding the anti-aircraft defence with the help of machine guns authorised to every regiment.

**ROBC.** To educate / train officers coming from Field Artillery about AA Artillery, Regimental Officers Basic Course (ROB-1) was started in 1972. This was quite an interesting course as students including senior majors who were posted for the first time from field artillery had already undergone advance courses in field artillery.

*'It took me some time to adjust with new way of life, Ack Ack was different from Field Artillery in every sense of word different. The life style, working pattern, firing, tactical concept was different . In field artillery an officer has much more to perform and is directly responsible for each round that is fire. In AA it is different, first the firing itself is rather abstract as the safety of the aircraft prohibits any fire which is realistic in nature ; firing and putting down a sleeve despite all its precision is still a simulated affair. We carried out firing at Korangi and I felt the difference between firing indirect and now firing direct. The power, thrill, rush of adrenalin while firing 14.5mm was a fantastic experience. These were my initial thoughts and resultantly I was able to secure a B grade in this course. The SAAA environment were very friendly and quite flexible , the Barrack was still being utilised as 'student mess'. One aspect which impressed me the most was the Sports Culture prevailing in the School, there were matches of Hockey in particular which were played with real zeal . Club at Malir was very active and wet,*

*musical evenings were a regular feature. In summer the swimming pool which had the distinction of being the only pool in Karachi which was raised thus quite a number of guests would visit just to have a dip in it.*

*I was posted to 74 LAA and within a year was back in SAAA for my ROG Course, by this time I had learnt and experienced the AA pattern and had fallen in love with this branch of artillery. Not much had changed in the School, I was again allotted 1/8 Sukkur Lines , same room. Major change was that now instead of cycle I had a motorcycle . Karachi was a city of lights’.<sup>188</sup>*

**Pakistan Naval Officer Course.** As part of inter services cooperation in the field of training, School of AA Artillery started with the special course for officer of Pakistan Navy. First course was organised on 14 April 1975.

**Drone Course.** To train drone flyers for Anti Aircraft Regiments. aim was to practice AA Firing and gun laying on the Drones. General Ehsan Ul Haq (retired CJSC) was among the pioneer instructors. He had undergone training on drones from China and later a team from China also came and stayed at AAA School for these Drones. The School conducted the first Drone Course on 16 February 1976.

**SOEC.** In order to enhance the professional knowledge of officers at relatively senior level, Senior Officers Employed Course (SOEC-1) started on 26 April 1976. It was more leaned towards tactical employment and preparing the officers for command.

For the first time the Officers of Gunnery Staff Course ex School of Artillery visited SAAD on 5 September 1981. Reciprocatively the students of AA Gunnery Staff Course 0/21 visited the Field Artillery School, Artillery Centre and installations at Kamra and Taxila in July 1983.

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<sup>188</sup> Major General retired Tahir Qazi, Commander AAD 2006-07.

**Sonmiani Ranges** were formally inaugurated by Major General Muhammad Afzal Khan (MGA) on 22 Nov 1981. The foundation stone of the School Mosque was laid by Major General Abdul Rehman Khan on 14 February 1983.

VCOAS, General Khalid Mahmood Arif inaugurated the School Library on 18 April 1984. AA School Commandant was elevated to the rank of brigadier and Brigadier Altaf Hussain became the 1<sup>st</sup> Commandant after its upgradation in 1980. General Mirza Aslam Baig the Vice Chief of Army Staff, visited the school on 13 April 1988. During his visit he advised that the school syllabi and training should be re-oriented in view of Land Air Warfare Concept 2000. School also gave a demo of indigenously developed Radio control target system “Ababeel” to the VCOAS, General Mirza Aslam Baig. Future manufacture of the systems by the School was approved and a drone workshop was established. Later a radio control target systems equivalent to Snipe was also develop and was used for practice firing as well as for laying practice. In 1988 School developed a prototype radio control surveillance system which could display all installations on the ground within three miles radius on the TV screen and can also be recorded on a cassette.

It was in 1989 that SAAD had run the first Unit Command Course (Air Defence) – 1

**Troops Families Welfare Centre (TFWC).** In 1988 TFWC was established. The focus was on the following:- Vocational Training. The families were given training in tailoring, embroidery and knitting. The wives of the JCOs /NCOs /ORs were given educational training of the primary level by hired private teachers. The examinations were conducted by the Sindh Education Board. No fee was charged from the students/participants. A primary school was also established for the children of the JCOs /NCOs /ORs and was given free books and stationary.



Anti-Aircraft School in early eighties was well established with two, two storied buildings for the accommodation for the student officers; but water or rather lack of it was the main source of anxiety among the students. Overall it was not a comfortable environment for the young officers, lack of furniture in the room, broken furniture and above all the lack of fly proofing allowed deadly mosquitoes to roam freely in the room. Students would often sleep on the roof of the buildings rather than in the room to enjoy the sea breeze.

**Redesignation of School.** In 1989, School of AA Artillery was re-designated as School of Army Air Defence and was placed undercommand Headquarter Army Air Defence Command. Brigadier Jamil Hassan, Commandant SAAD played a key role as he had put up the academic aspects of the scheme and it was approved by National Defence University and Command and Staff College. Eventually the School was placed under Air defence Directorate at GHQ. Efforts of Major General Tahir Qazi are worth highlighting in this aspect. *‘I professionally prefer that all institutions must work under IGT&E in GHQ. This not only brings parity and uniformity in training but also is beneficial to the institutions as no formation can match the resources of GHQ. I initially as Commander AA Division in Karachi highlighted this aspect and finally when I became Commander Air Defence, this point was high on my agenda and finally the AD School was placed undercommand GHQ in 2006’* In 1990 on advice from IGT&E, the Gunnery Staff Courses for JCO/ NCO were dropped. Specialized courses for them , relevant to the weapon system possessed by the various units were introduced. An Electrical & Computer section was established in 1989. Module of basic computer were included in the syllabi of each NCOs’ courses ever since.

A task was under-taken to revise / re-write all pamphlets. By the end of 1990-1991 School had re-written and published 14

new pamphlets which is a record published for any School. After established of Air Defence as a separate arm, the School ran the first Junior Staff Course (AD) on 18 January 1992. During the year 1992, the School also conducted the first MCC (AD) on 28 March 1992. Air Defence Gunnery Instructor Course started on 2 February 1992. **SAMIC.** Surface to Air Missile Instructor Course started on 2 March 1998. **FCEIC.** Fire Control Equipment Instructor Course started on 6 July 1998.

**Visit of PMA Cadets.** For the first time, PMA cadets visited SAAD on 25 October 1994, as part of education visit to different institutions. They were briefed about different training facilities along with a demonstration of drone flying.

**Inauguration of Iftikhar Auditorium – August 2002.** Due to rapid expansion in SAAD and increased in courses intake, Moin Auditorium was falling short of space to accommodate all courses on various occasions. To offset this problem, Iftikhar Auditorium was revived. It was inaugurated by Lieutenant General Khateer Hasan Khan, Commander AAD on 12 August 2002. This Iftikhar Auditorium acknowledges the contribution made by Lieutenant General Iftikhar Hussain (retired) who not only underwent every course in this School but also served as instructor and commandant.

**Affiliation of SAAD with Karachi University.** SAAD was affiliated with University of Karachi for award of Masters of Science (Military Sciences) Degree to Air Defence Staff Course (ADSC) students in July 2006. There is an entire history behind this achievement. School had been trying for some years to be affiliated with Karachi University but it always fell short of the final letter. Lieutenant Colonel Sher Baz was the instructor in the School, Brigadier Nasrullah was the Commandant and Major General Tahir Qazi was the Commander AAD and all these three officers played a key and vital part in the end achievement.

Brigadier Sher Baz (retired) narrates, ‘ Major General Qazi was persistence in getting the SAAD to have an affiliation with Karachi University thus improving the standard of the education within the SAAD, he as Commander AAD was pressing hard to the SAAD Commandant Brigadier Nasrullah; thus Commandant called me in his office and put the issue to me. I visited Karachi University and met the Vice Chancellor on the same day and after few more visits, I realised that we SAAD cannot have this affiliation without the moral and physical support of the professors of Karachi University. The head of department was very kind and he helped me in every aspect, in putting our syllabus in order with recommended international books, which we purchased for our library. A team from Karachi University also came and visited our classes. Finally I appeared before the Senate of the Karachi University. Hall was full of professors, myself and Commandant, we were waiting outside, when our name was called in, I walked in and honestly it was a terrifying scene. I gave small presentation and there were questions, to every question I would answer with a premise dating back to Pakistan Military Academy and so on. After a gruelling hour in which we gave satisfactorily replies. After our turn, there were few more issues of the Senate. However after a month, I was able to finally get hold of the precious letter. Commandant was in Headquarters AAD Command. I informed him but he could not believe it and asked me to fax the letter as a proof, which I did. Later Commander Major General Tahir Qazi personally called me and appreciated the efforts.

**Establishment of ADBFS.** An Air Defence Battle Field Simulator was established in 2007, in order to provide tactical training to officer in digitized atmosphere. However, first digital map exercise was run in June 2008 for ADSC-46 in virtually paper-free environment. Major Mehraj Khan put in commendable efforts for procurement of digitized maps, networking of the consoles and development of software for system integration. It was renamed as ETC (Ehsan Training Complex) in 2009.

**Giraffe Radar Simulator (GRS).** It is the first indigenously develop simulator project undertaken by SAAD to impart realistic training to the students. The indigenously development simulator has following features / adventures over in built radar simulator. Most prominent feature of GRS is the assessment engine. Each action of the operation is being assessed during the course of ex and at the end it not only gives the tr result of every operation but also analyse various actions taken by combatant leader /radar NCO. **Sky Guard Radar Simulator (SRS).** Successful completion of indigenously development GRS nurtured the idea of development a computer based radar simulator for Sky Guard Radar. Although school is now in possession of Sky Guard Radar,

### **Upgradation of Appointment**

In August 2019, the appointment of School Commandant was upgraded to the rank of major general; it is in line with the existing policy of Pakistan Army where the commandants of training institutions have been upgraded. School of Artillery, School of Armour, School of Infantry and Tactics are few of the training institutions that have been upgraded. This highlights the importance and confidence of GHQ in the Army Air Defence. Major General Sarfraz Muhammad is the first commandant of SAAD in present appointment.

### **Army Air Defence –Army Aviation and Special Service Group**

Present day Army Aviation Corps was also part of Royal Indian Artillery before independence. In the British Army on the onset of WWII a new organisation was raised known as Royal Air Observation Corps, Royal Air Force. It was the culmination point of almost two decades of paper fighting between the Army and the RAF. Army was stressing upon having a dedicated air

squadrons manned by the army pilots more specifically by the Royal Artillery officers for aerial observation and shoots. After 1947 -1958, only artillery officers were inducted in it for duration of 3-5 years and then reverted back to their regiments in artillery. Many of Anti-Aircraft Artillery officers joined the AOP and served as pilots and later as commanders and instructors. In 1976 when Army Aviation became a corps many of the AA Officers opted to stay in AAC including Brigadier Hamid Chaudhry who remained as commandant of Army Aviation School for a record six years, and others including Lieutenant General Iftikhar Hassan joined back .

Among the pioneers AOP officers from AA includes Captain Kirmani of 5 HAA, he was among the very first batch of five officers who went to England for flying training in 1947-48. Lieutenant Hameed Ul Haq Abbasy who topped his basic YOs course at Malir was among the pioneers pilots, he later retired as brigadier in Army Aviation. Lieutenant Subhan Baig he again topped his Yos and served in AOP. Lieutenant Nagi of 5 HAA served in AOP and later embraced martyrdom in October 1965 when his L-19 crashed near Amritsar in heavy fog. Major M.Mehmood also topped his Yos, he came from field artillery and was part of AOP , he later commanded a squadron in 1965 War and retired as brigadier. Lt Col Faiz Brandon commanded an Air OP squadron and also commanded 29 LAA in 1971 War. Lieutenant Colonel Hashmi commanded 58 LAA during 1971 War he was among the pioneer pilots of AOP. Among the present officers in Army Aviation Brigadier Rehan is from 13 LAA, Brigadier Kiani remained as chief pilot of ISI Flight, he is from 67 (SP) LAA, another much famed pilot in AAC is Lieutenant Colonel Ali Arjumand, he was among the pioneer jet pilots of AAC. Colonel retired Mahmood Islam of 58 MAA won the coveted Best Pilot Trophy in Army Aviation School in 1989.

Captain Uzair was decorated S.Bt posthoumsly for his action during Kargil War as Mi-17 Pilot, Major Shahid Aulakh embraced martyrdom during training flying at Rahwali.

### **Special Services Group (SSG)**

SSG is also a volunteer formation raised in 1956 at Cherat, it remained an elusive organisation till early sixties when it opened up and inducted officers and troops. History of SSG is incomplete without the heroics of officers and men at Siachen among them Captain Salik Nawaz Cheema Shaheed SJ certainly shines out. He was commissioned in 127 MAA and stood first in his YOs Course at Malir. Regiments are definitely reluctant to let go such brilliant officers as such processing of application within the regiment includes request, plead and involves all serving and retired officers to let the commanding officer allows the officer to appear before the test. Captain Salik surmounted all these hurdles and managed to appear at given time at Attock Fort by travelling all night from Sargodha on the roof of the last departing bus.

Among the present officers in AAD Colonel Julian Peter is performing the colonel staff of a division, he has served as adjutant in a SSG Battalion.

## *Chapter Eleven*

### **Army Air Defence Centre 1990-2020**

It is not the gun but the man behind the gun which matters, is an old but proven military proverb and it still holds true in our and future era. Before the raising of the Air Defence as a separate corps, the recruits were being trained at Artillery Centre, Attock.

On 1<sup>st</sup> March 1989, Army Air Defence Centre was raised at Malir Cantonment. The selection of the city and area was a much debated and deliberated effort, traditionally all training centres of Pakistan Army are located in hilly areas with an odd exception. Mainly due to the fact that majority of them were raised before independence. Sargodha was a strong contender as a training centre, not only it had been the home of the oldest anti aircraft brigade but it is also the heart of the own air force as well. An Air Defender must be trained in an environment where he is constantly, regularly breathes in an air where the sound and sight of the aircraft is an integral part of the sky.

Karachi and more specifically Malir was chosen due to the fact that , Anti-Aircraft School is also located here and as such it provides an ideal platform to have a viable, economical, efficient, modern and proficient training to new inductees. The only reservation was regarding the weather, accommodation and the security environment prevailing at Karachi at that particular time; with the passage of time the selection of site has proven its merit.

The move from Artillery Centre at Attock was a gigantic exercise in every aspect. It took almost three months to iron out the minor creases of the separation. Artillery Centre was all helpful and gave a warm send off to the AA Training Battery . It took almost eleven

days to reach Malir Cantonment where the arriving recruits and their instructors were received by the SAAD Commandant. 100 LAA not only shared their lines with the newly established Centre but also provided much needed administrative support. Accommodation takes time for construction, thus bunkers were dug and recruits were accommodated in them; it is still known as Bunker Colony. Area was vast , barren full of bushes with jackals howling after sunset.

AADC underwent certain drastic transitions in training regimes in the initial stages. In 1995 it was decided to put on hold at the training at Centre and recruits should only be given Basic Military Training at centre and specific to trade training be conducted at the regiments. ADRC 26 was the last course to be trained at Centre. It can be seen that in first six years no less than 25 Courses were passed out. Subedar Major Nasar (100 LAA) was enrolled at Karachi. *‘I had travelled to Malir from Sargodha as I had heard about the vacancies at the Centre. It was December 1994, after screening of my documents, I underwent physical tests which included running and push-ups. I was later told to wait for the confirmation letter; which finally arrived in February 1995. At Centre , my Squad Number was also 25, another course ADRC 26 was also undergoing training; we were six recruits in each course. We were accommodated in the newly inaugurated building. After ten weeks of basic military training in which we carried out small arms firing at ranges outside Malir, we were posted to 141 Lt AD Regiment at Nowshehra. We twelve recruits underwent two weeks of map reading and later attached with 5 Lt AD at Warsak. I was given the gunnery trade and after completion of ten weeks of training on 37mm Gun we were again sent back to the 141 Lt AD where we were issued with our Army Numbers and finally posted to present regiment’.*

For next two years there was no centralised training at centre, it was revived in 1997 with new vigour under new training policy.



**Havildar Abdur Raheem** (100 Lt AD) was working as tea vendor at Rohri railway Station in 1997, his elder brother was a sepoy in Army Supply Corps, his father had died while he was in his teens. *‘ I was earning a good daily wage from the tea stall, I still remember that it was 12<sup>th</sup> October 1997 when my mother told me rather ordered me to go to the Army Selection Centre. For some time she has been insisting on me joining the army and I was reluctant, I gave many logics in my favour like I am earning more than a soldier and so on but she was very insistent and thus I reached the selection centre. My mother accompanied me. Infact she had been keeping herself abreast with the selection dates. In the selection centre I first gave a written examination, then there was running and finally push-ups (30 in number). The staff at the selection centre first gave us a demonstration of how to do push-ups. In the medical examination, during eye tests I read first four words and then I could not read the next word and after some time I was informed that I must get my eyes checked and approved from the medical specialist at Pano Aqil. Next day along with my mother, we took train and reached Pano Aqil after walking a long distance. I was cleared and next day again I reported back to selection centre at Sukkur, my mother again accompanied me. The staff at Selection Centre finally gave me a chit and told me to report back next day along with all warm clothing. I don't know how she did it but my mother by evening had even bought shaving kit for me, prepared halwa and other edibles and packed my belongings.*

*After spending an entire day at Selection Centre, I alongwith other twenty odd candidates were told to reach the railway station, there were two trains, one was Quetta Express going towards the Rawalpindi and other was Sukkur Express going to Karachi. I was told to board the Karachi Express. At the Rohri Junction, the break is for thirty minutes and my sister, brother in law and mother were waiting, My one sister was living with her husband in Karachi , she*

*was duly informed by my mother to receive me at railway station. At Karachi cantonment railway Station, I was received by my sister and her husband, the chit with me issued by selection centre had Defence written on it so we went to Karachi defence Society. After an hour we were told by someone to go to Malir, so we again reached back to railway station and finally got the Al Noor Bus which dropped us at X-20 Bus stop and from there one Military Police soldier guided us how to reach the Army Air Defence Centre.*

*At the gate, the sentry first checked my luggage and then allowed me to enter and very reluctantly allowed my brother in law to drop me inside. Subedar Nawaz (41 MAA) was the incharge of receiving the new recruits, I sat there whole day in which I was offered the food, and at evening I was shown my barrack.*

*At that time there was no concept of Battery rather we were given the Squad, and we trained together as Squad. The Centre had acute shortage of water. Training was tough and discipline strict yet our drill instructors and officers were very caring, motivating us in every way to keep our morale. We as recruits were also giving the night duties with a wooden stick. We were also short of charpoys, we had steel double decker charpoys. I once bought a plastic bucket to have water, there was a brick on the tap and as luck would have it, as I put my bucket under the tap the brick fell down and my bucket had cracks; I tried to repair it with tape but it partially worked. We as recruits thus would take the bath while watering the Cheeko Garden. There was a small hotel at present day AD Mart known as Geedar Hotel (Jackal Hotel) from where we recruits would at times get our snacks. On our mid term we were given three months pay together which was 1750 Rupees per month. It was like having a gold in our hand. I bought items for my mother and sister.*

*I, in my recruitment letter was placed as OCU, and after mid term taught the communication, GRC-9 was the main set. We re-*

*cruids also worked in the cook house, thus every Squad had its rotation of serving the food. Rice was a favoured dish and it was at times used as a favour to put an extra spoon in our friend's plate. I still remember the day when the first Paratha was cooked, it was Ramadan, before that we were given Puris. We were excited about it and in initial days ate too much of these parathas. We were also encouraged to purchase the black iron trunk, Brigadier Razzaq was the commandant, he was keen that we should have a box for our belonging instead of using colourful and varied boxes and shoppers. Ironsmith made these boxes in the mechanical transport park, on a given day, all recruits were fall-in and commandant inspected the boxes, he was a tall and heavy man. To check the strength of the boxes, he jumped with his military boots twice on the boxes and they sustained this experiment. I was deeply impressed with this demonstration and bought one box for Rupees 600. It is still with me and as strong as it was on that day.*

*I am absolutely happy with my military life and my regiment is the best in the army, my only regret in life is that my mother expired three days before I was promoted as Lance Naik.*

## **Present**

Today, a beautiful, well laid, highly professional, modern and efficient training centre is in place, where a raw recruit who has been selected by the Army Air Defence Centre (AADC) itself after a rigid and strict entrance examination undergoes 32 weeks of military training before he is passed out.

Pakistan Army as per its policy grants vacancies for the induction of new men into Air Defence, criteria is to be a matric educated, having minimum height of five feet two inches, medically fit and a Pakistani national. There is no bar on caste, creed or religion. All

provinces are given share basing upon their population. Number of vacancies thus vary yearly , apart from the regular criteria 22 seats are reserved for sportsmen.

All candidates report at Air Defence Centre, where an initial check of their documents is carried out, then medical followed by a written test and interview before the merit list is issued. Interview is headed by commandant and his deputy along with a psychologist, aim is to judge the candidate. Education and physical excellence have its own weightage however the moral character is the bloodline of soldiery and this is evaluated before inducting a man into the Air Defence.

After being selected, the recruit is informed through a letter alongwith instructions; he is received at the Karachi railway station. At the Centre which is more affectionately known as Home, they are enrolled into training companies. The Home is organised into two training battalions, each having four companies and each company is having three squads. The training itself is for 32 weeks, with first term , known as Basic Military Training(BMT) lasts for twenty weeks, the second or final term duration is ten weeks; in between two weeks of mid term break.

In the initial days of training a new recruit is mentally and physically moulded into the military life. Tough physical regime is adhered, a recruit body has to be practically created again , drill staffs plays an important and vital role in this. Day for a recruit starts very early, after Fajr prayers, physical training starts which includes running and building muscles, a healthy breakfast and the day proceeds. There are classes of map reading, field craft, small arms firing and handling of Rifle G-3. Lunch is consumed at noon, a small break and then till sunset it is either drill or sports. After retreat, dinner is served in the mess, an hour of education in classrooms and then another hour of physical exercise. More than anything, it

is the mind which breaks before the body, a recruit is thus trained to increase his mental and physical endurance.

At the end of first term a merit roll is made and basing upon this, the recruits are given trades like gunnery, missile, radars. All trades have a scarlet thread of their own which the officers understand and as such picks the right recruit. Each recruit after the basic military training phase himself have also developed a mind-body coordination mechanism. Final term is focused on special training, recruits are introduced to different guns and missiles, they are taken on visits to different training institutions like own Air Defence School and other sister services to broaden their horizon and build their confidence.

One of the most glaring difference from past is the very low ratio of smokers among the new generation, in past every soldier was given cigarettes as part of ration but now it is difficult to find even a matchbox among the recruits. Discipline state is also good, so far there has been no incident of any fighting among the recruits. The pay and ration is very good, a recruit is now getting Rupees 14500 per month with free ration. Few items they do purchase which includes track suit and mufti dress.

The philosophy of the Home is to train recruits in a manner that they should be able to handle the most sophisticated weapon system in their regiments, thus they must have self-confidence as the basic brick. Training regime is in line with the training policy of the army, in 1992 under General Asif Nawaz then Chief of Army Staff, while presiding the Air Defence Commanding Officers conference, it was directed that recruits training should be decentralised and they should be trained in regiments rather than in the centre. In 1997, it was decided to resume the training at centre again. In 2008, the directive was to make the training simple but tough thus more focus on weapon handling and field craft.

Administratively, the Centre was initially under command Army Defence Command, it was unorthodox as all other training centres in army are under General Headquarters(GHQ). The advantage of having it under own command is in the flexibility of training but the major drawback is that such centres are thus ineligible for the training grants and equipment which the GHQ provides to centre. Major General Tahir Qazi was a great advocate of placing it under the GHQ rather than under the Air Defence Command, *‘I had my own reasons and logic on the subject, when I was commanding the air defence division at Malir, to me, the centre would have benefitted more if it comes under the GHQ and as such I put forward my views. Fortunately when later I assumed the command of the corps, I was able to implement my initial viewpoint’*.

At the end of the training a passing out parade is held, in 2018 the first ever night passing out parade was conducted; mainly due to hot weather in day. Best recruit is given a sword of honour and runners up is awarded with a cane. Top ten recruits have a choice of joining a regiment of their own choice and similarly brackets are made and they are posted by the Record Wing. Recruits are given initially Air Defence number during training and on passing out are given Army Numbers. A course is usually of 750 strength and Home runs two courses in a year. The passing out is an elaborate and glamorous event, preparations which mainly focus on the improvement of drill standards are carried out around the clock with little break. Recruits are in the high state of morale as they themselves feel the reward of their hard work. It is a tribute to them, their drill instructors, officers, and commandant to achieve such results; a simple boy has been made into a man in thirty two weeks.

## *Chapter Twelve*

### **Sports in Anti-Aircraft and Air Defence**

#### **1950-1965**

Sports are an integral part of military life, not only it keeps the men physically fit but it also foster esprit-de-corps. In peace time sports competition provides an even playing fields for the regiments to compete and earn glory.

Regular sports competitions started with the raising of 3 AGRPA in 1950, it had 5 HAA, 6 LAA and 13 LAA as pioneer regiments. Brigadier Pinchard the very first brigade commander was a keen and good player of hockey. On his first visit to the brigade's first ever outdoor exercise at Thatta, he played hockey as member of officers team on the last day of exercise. Officers team won 3-2 against the troops, Brigadier Pinchard himself scored two goals.

The sports and games were held in Royal Pakistan Army on the zone basis, Karachi being one zone alongwith Multan, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Peshawar Zones. Quetta was part of Karachi Zone. 3AGRPA being part of Royal Pakistan Artillery was also eligible to take part in sports moot of the artillery centre. Within the AA regiments there was daily physical training period mandatory for entire regiment, in the evening there were games period of an hour in which officers and troops would play games together, hockey was the most favourite followed by football. Individual sports include boxing, tennis and squash. Golf was exclusive for senior officers for the reason that a young officer was expected to exert hard with troops.

In March 1951, annual RPA sports moot started at Malir. We (3 AGRPA headquarters) lost hockey to 6 LAA and football to 4

Field<sup>189</sup> 6 LAA later went on to play finals in hockey and football but lost both. In August 1951, Rovers Cup Hockey was held at Karachi and 3AGRPA put in the officers team under the name Army Gunners, however they lost to police in second round. 19 LAA and 20 HAA regiments were the new raised regiments and as such their inclusion made the sports meet more intense and competitive. 20 HAA won the zonal hockey championship in 1952,; they won the finals from 1<sup>st</sup> Mountain Artillery regiment. In the same year 6 LAA won the football trophy at RPA Centre, 19 LAA was second in boxing.

The first athletic championship of 3 AGRPA commenced on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1952, it was an elaborate affair in which welcome committees were formed, 13 LAA team arrived by train from Peshawar. Athletes from 5 HAA, 6 LAA, 13 LAA, 19 LAA and 20 HAA alongwith teams of brigade headquarters participated, only element missing was the 45 LAA Battery which was deployed at Dacca. On 10<sup>th</sup> September, the closing ceremony was observed, Mrs Brigadier Pinchard distributed prizes among the winning athletes. Marathon was won by Naik Aslam of 6 LAA. By the time, Second 3 AGRPA sports championship was held in March 1954, command had changed with Brigadier Elliot replacing Brigadier Pinchard. Athletics were held in the sports ground of 5 HAA Regiment ; it was won by 6 LAA Regiment. Mrs Brigadier Elliot was the chief guest. In 1955 championship which was won by 19 LAA, Mrs Brigadier Lyall Grant was the chief guest as Brigadier Elliot had been posted out and Brigadier Lyall Grant had taken over the command of 3 AGRPA. High point of the 3 AGRPA sports history definitely came in December 1955 when it won the Karachi Zone Athletic Championship; Governor General Iskandar Mirza was the chief guest and awarded the trophy.

At regimental level, the first inter troop and inter battery Rifle Firing competition was held between 22-25 February 1954 under

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arrangements of 19 LAA, regimental headquarters team of 13 LAA won the inaugural cup. Next year (1955) the competition was raised to have inter-regiment rifle firing competition, 13 LAA was the champion regiment.

### **Havildar Muhammad Aslam ‘Marathon Man’**

Sepoy Muhammad Aslam was the first international sportsman of Pakistan Army, he was enrolled in **6 LAA** in September 1947 and won the gold medal in the Asia Olympics held at Karachi in 1948, Quaid -E- Azam gave him a signed merit of certificate. Havildar Aslam represented Pakistan in Helsinki (1952) and Melbourne (1956) Olympics without winning any medal. In 2006, Army Air Defence Command initiated a Aslam Medal for best athlete in cross country event.

### **Subedar Mumtaz Ali ‘Boxer’**

Subedar Mumtaz Ali was enrolled in **5 HAA** Regiment in 1953, he first rose to prominence during inter battery and inter-regiment boxing matches. In 1958, he won the Zonal Boxing Championship and same year representing Army won the gold medal in Inter-Services Boxing Championship, he won a silver next year in same championship. In 1960, he won gold medal in 7<sup>th</sup> Pakistan Olympics held at Dhaka, he went on to win two more gold medals in inter-services in 1961 and 1962. His last medal was in 1963 when he won Army Boxing Championship. He retired in 1985.

Another worth mentioning athlete was Lance Naik Sher Muhammad of **19 LAA** who won gold medal in high jump in zonal and army level in 1957.

The sports rivalry was intense and interesting among the AA regiments. 5 HAA and 6 LAA had it among them from the day one; without a rivalry sports in army loses its gloss. By mid fifties with

three LAA and two HAA regiments, this rivalry also took the form of LAA Vs HAA. Thus initially 5 HAA and 20 LAA would compete but in case if one of them reaches a final then the other heavy gunners would cheer them against the LAA gunners. Sportsmen were given a special privilege in the regiment, they would perform all the duties required of a soldier yet they were given preferential treatment in leave and discipline.

Boxing and athletics became forte of 3 Ack Ack Brigade. In January 1957, in the zonal boxing championship held on 21-23 January, 3 AA Brigade won the trophy, Commander-in-Chief General Ayub Khan was the chief guest. 3 AA brigade again won the Boxing Championship in 1959, Lieutenant General Azam Khan who was also performing the duty of rehabilitation minister of the central government was the chief guest. In July 1957, for the first time Zonal Wrestling Championship was held, final was played between 51 Infantry Brigade and 3 AA Brigade won the championship. In same year (1957) 3 AA Brigade participated in Basketball Championship for the first time, ack ack gunners won 'with a comfortable lead' against 51 Infantry Brigade. In September 1958, 6 LAA won the inaugural inter-regiment basketball championship by defeating 5 HAA in the final.

Aim of the sports was to encourage each and every soldier and officer to take part in games, thus in February 1958, athletics competition were held at battery level, therefore instead of regiments, the batteries were the teams. 24 HAA Battery was declared the Champion Battery, 18 HAA and 50 LAA Batteries shared second position and 12 HAA was at third position. Another sports with a direct bearing on military operation was swimming which was introduced in May 1958, an inter-regiment swimming championship was held, 13 LAA won it and 6 LAA was second. This allowed brigade to select good swimmers for the forthcoming water polo championship. It was held in July 1958 and 3 AA Brigade won it.

In January 1960, there were few changes in the sports competitions, 19(SP) LAA now being an SP was stationed at Kharian, 13 LAA had move to Karachi and 6 LAA had left Karachi for Peshawar and Brigadier D.P.O'Reilly was the brigade commander. Inter-Unit football championship was the very first sporting event of new decade, 20 LAA won the trophy, this was the only inter-unit sports competition for the year 1960. In December 1961, boxing and inter-unit athletics and cross country championship was held. 6 LAA won the cross country and 5 LAA won the boxing trophy. **13 LAA** won the inter-unit basketball trophy for the year 1962. In this year apart from basketball, football matches were also held which were won by **20 LAA**. In December 1962, 6 LAA won the brigade athletic trophy but more importantly they won the brigade boxing trophy as well beating 5 LAA by one point. 6 LAA again won the boxing trophy in 1964. 'The championship was held at Malir (Karachi Lines) in 13 LAA lines...The championship was keenly contested'. It is worth highlighting that **6 LAA** also won the wrestling championship in 1964 as well. However, 6 LAA efforts to win the swimming trophy was thwarted by 20 LAA, 6 LAA was runners up followed by 13 LAA and 5 LAA.

## **December 1964**

The last and major sporting event of the year was zonal athletic championship, it was held at Malir 29-31 December 1964, Major General Tikka Khan GOC 8 Division was the chief guest. 3 AA Brigade won the coveted trophy overall, there were thirty-five teams participating in the championship. Captain Feroze Khan of 6 LAA was the team captain and received the trophy from chief guest. In 1965, four main sporting events were contested by the regiments before the out break of hostilities with India. 6 LAA won the boxing in January 1965, 13 LAA won the basketball in February and 5 LAA won the hockey championship in March 1965. Football

trophy was won by 20 LAA in April before all regiments proceeded for deployment.

Lieutenant General (retired) Iftikhar Hussain Shah highlights ‘*I was posted in 13 LAA which was at Peshawar, another regiment 20 LAA was at Kohat ...our regiments would travel by train to Karachi to participate in sports. I had never been to Karachi then, but had listen very colourful narratives about the city. My Battery Captain (BK) Captain Mansoor was the team captain of regimental hockey. He instructed me to start playing hockey every evening so, you can be put in the team. I had never played hockey before, but there was no other way to see Karachi thus for well over a month I practiced hockey very evening. In the end, commanding officer took the trials and I was included in the team. The journey by train was thrilling. We were not authorised any voucher to travel in the air conditioned railway sleepers (which officers are authorised on duty or leave) rather we had to travel in Third Class (as the lower class was known then). At Karachi, we had few practices but I was not included in the playing eleven and left at my own to explore the city*’.<sup>190</sup>

## 1967

In the post 1965 War, the sports events started in January 1967, thus marking the end of hostilities and a sign of normalcy in military life. New regiments like 41 HAA, 43 LAA, 52 HAA and 58 LAA were raised soon after the war and as such they participated in these events. Old regiments maintained and retained their strong hold in sports by winning all trophies among themselves. In the new raisings the entire batteries were transferred from the mother regiments, thus sportsmen were posted out, the positive aspect was that new regiments also had strong foundation of sports in their culture.

In January 1967, zonal athletics championship was held at Malir, apart from 3 Independent Anti Aircraft Brigade (3 IAAB),

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<sup>190</sup> Interview with Lieutenant General iftikhar, July 2019 at Islamabad.

51 and 55 Infantry Brigades and divisional troops took part in it. The championship was won by ack ack gunners. Gunner Gul Baz Khan was declared the best athlete, he won the marathon. Naik Atta, Lance Havildar Munir (100 meters) and Gunner Muhammad Sadiq in shot put were outstanding athletes. **Air Marshal Asghar Khan** was the chief guest, he gave the trophy to Captain Mehboob the team captain. *‘Captain Mehboob had participated in the last event of the competition; 4 hundred meters relay race. In spite of the fact that changeover of the baton at the last station had not taken place at the same time, yet the officer with his determination and flawless method of sprint covered up all the distance in a splendid fashion and won the Relay Race with a lead of about ten meters amongst the cheerful applauses of the spectators. This was really a colourful event of the meet’.*<sup>191</sup>

The chain of events in the country that included agitation, imposition of martial law, cyclone at Chittagong, general elections, imposition of emergency and finally the War dampened the spirits and no major sporting event was conducted

## **Post 1971**

In 1972, new regiments were raised namely 94 LAA, 95 LAA, 96 LAA, 97 LAA, 98 LAA, 100 LAA, 101 LAA and 102 LAA. New brigade 4 AA Brigade in 1972 followed by raising of Headquarters Anti Aircraft Command at Westridge with Major General Iftikhar as first GOC in April 1975 expanded the anti aircraft. Another brigade 45 AA Brigade was raised in 1975. All these developments also shaped the sports competitions. Two new messes were inaugurated, one at Malir and other at Sargodha in 1977-78. Both these messes had tennis courts and squash courts thus these two games also became regular sports tournaments, resultantly some good officers represented AA at corps and army level in these two games.

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Corps LAA Regiments were participating in their respective corps. 75 LAA 'Katiba Mujahid' won the 2 Corps Troops wrestling championship on 21 February 1975 and kept on winning the athletics, wrestling, football, cross country, volleyball championships till 1979 when they found it hard to hold on to these trophies. In February 1977, the first regular sports meet after the 1971 War was held at 3 AA Brigade at Sargodha. **58 'Athwanja' LAA** was the champion regiment; Athwanja later through the year went to win the basketball, swimming and hockey championships as well. Boxing trophy was won by **5 LAA** after quite a time. In 1978, athletics championship was won by 41 HAA. A strong sporting rivalry developed between the Athwanja and 41 HAA, both vying for the coveted trophies. Basketball was won by 58 LAA but volleyball and football were won by 41 HAA. However 58 LAA bounced back and won the Hockey Championship in the heat of May, 41 HAA were the runners up. 58 LAA also won basketball and hockey in 1978 but 41 HAA won the athletics championship.

### **Naib Subedar Niaz Muhammad**

Naib Subedar Niaz of **41 HAA** was a renowned boxer and represented regiment, army and country at international level. He won gold medal in a boxing meet at Moscow in 1977. He also won a gold medal in Asian Boxing championship at Tokyo in 1982 and won a bronze medal in Asian Games at Delhi in 1982. He later served in **127 MAA** and retired as honorary captain, all in all he won 13 gold, 5 silver and two bronze medals in boxing. In boxing, 127 MAA had some fierce boxers including Naib Subedar Sajid Mehmood who won two gold and five silver medals, Havildar Khalid Pervez also won two gold and one silver at national level.

**Havildar Nazar Hussain** also from 41 HAA was an athlete who participated in many international meets. In 1986 he won a silver medal in high jump in an athletic meet in Saudi Arabia. **Lieutenant**

**Colonel Tariq Jamil Gill** (late) also from 41 HAA as a captain rose to prominence with his gymnastic skills, he won a gold and a silver in 1980 National Gymnastic Championship. It is worth highlighting that **41 HAA** from 1973 onwards made a mark in athletics, they had some of the best runners in the anti aircraft regiments. Havildar (SM) Muhammad Nazir in 800 meters, Havildar Muhammad Aziz in 1000 meters, Lance Havildar Fateh Khan in 400 meters hurdles and Havildar Abdul Karim in 3000 meters category earned laurels for the regiment.

### **Mid Eighties**

The organisational deployment of the anti-aircraft brigades and regiments was such that , regiment of one brigade was stationed in another brigade, for instance 127 MAA was part of 4 AA Brigade but it was stationed at Sargodha and similarly 13 LAA while being undercommand of 3 AA Brigade was located in Risalpur. From sporting point of view it allowed teams to travel and interact with other regiments at different stations. The sports calendar was issued well in advance, mostly events were planned in first half of the year. Within a regiment a sports NCO was appointed who looked after the sports item, a regimental cutting only from officers was made as sports fund. A fresh second lieutenant posted in the regiment was expected to be good in at least one game. Army sports rule made it mandatory for the regimental teams to have one officer in playing team present within the ground or court throughout the duration of the match. Not all subalterns were good in sports thus they had to learn it and play every evening with troops to be able to take part in the events. Old hands in the regiment would coach the new officer and in this manner the officer would begin his career in the army. A beautiful way to interact with the troops.

In daily games period the standard dress code for the troops was the khaki long cotton shorts, khaki woolen socks, canvas ankle high

brown shoes and white vest. A JCO would wear white trouser and white shirt and same holds true for the officers. Track suits were not in yet and no regiment had track suits of their own . Most popular shoes were the Servis Cheetah and Bata North Star, these shoes were purchased out of regiment fund and given to the sports men. Hockey without any rational reason slowly and gradually faded away to an extent that by mid-eighties it was no longer being played competitively. One factor was the cost of hockey sticks, it requires 22 sticks to play a match within the regiment. Another game to fade away was the swimming; there never was a regular swimming pool in Sargodha. Volleyball was the most popular game among the troops; Kabbadi was introduced in this period.

Recruits in anti-aircraft regiments hail from rural areas of Pakistan where there is no sports facility; even today no village in Pakistan can claim to have a basketball court or an athletic ground thus it is a wonder that these men without any formal training rose to such dizzy heights in sports. Regiments identify and then groom sportsmen, soldiers are physically fit by virtue of good food , healthy living and tough job tasks. Regiments would hire local civilian coaches to train their teams, there are regular courses at Army School of Physical Training where officers and soldiers are trained as coaches . Once a competition date has been announced then a month before the real training starts , team captain's first duty is to plead to the second in command and adjutant to spare the team from night duties and be given extra amount to have milk and refreshment; often this petition is delayed but always granted in the end. Team is excused from wearing uniform and they perform their routine duties in sports dress. This has given birth to the term 'tracksuit ki naukri'. Early in the morning just after fajr prayers, the teams would gather outside the BOQs and from there they would start running and later join the regiment in morning PT period, followed by practice which last till tea break time.



The era was such that there were no computers or even direct dialing telephone thus record keeping of soldiers was mostly the duty of the regiment. The philosophy in majority of the regiments was 'winning is not the everything, it is the only thing' thus young team captain in collaboration with old hands of the regiment would probe and exploit all legal lacunas to overcome the restrictions and rules. Civilian sportsmen would be enrolled as sweepers or waiters and as such they would qualify to represent the regiment teams. On the other hand, it was also a task to spy on the rival team and find out their paper weakness and shortcomings. Long meetings at night by the team members in regimental recreation room would devise the strategy the cardinal aspect was 'that everything is fair in sports for the regiment'. The teams would arrive from out station, the officer would be accommodated in BOQs often living with his coursemates. In Sargodha in mid eighties there was nothing special in the town other than soda cola at Bomb Chowk, the public call offices were also located there to make three minute telephone call. Selection of referees for the matches was a delicate issue, this was the duty of host regiment thus they were well looked after. The dilemma with civilian referees was that they could not grasp the spirit of these matches, referees had to be briefed that they must overlook minor fouls, jabs, pushes, grabs, holds and let the ball be rolling. Ground would be scrumptiously marked, colourful buntings on the road leading to the ground. Rival regiments would walk to the ground amidst battle cries and cheers for the team. Dhol and Shehnai was an integral part of the gala. During match, there would be constant coaching to all the team members by almost all the regiment including barber and dhobi, each and every point scored was celebrated with beats of dhol and slogans. Every game had its own flavour and flair.

The sports ground at Sargodha was located as such that teams has to pass infront of the regiments offices. After final, the winning

team garlanded and with dhol, sehnai music would walk back, taking bit of extra time in front of rival regiments lines.

After the tournament is over, losing and winning teams had two different tales to narrate, winning team being garlanded and given extra leave, losing team captain's uphill task was to get the expenditures incurred on team to be approved. Second in Command's cynical observation starting from glasses of lemonade consumed to the standard of haircut of the team. Often commanding officer of losing regiment would not have tea break with the officers for few days to show his displeasure and soon everything returns to normalcy and regiments start preparing for next competition.

Cricket was not a regular game, very few soldiers could even follow the game itself however officers were keen followers. There were no television in the tea bars or offices then, thus it was quite an exercise just to know the score. During test matches which were shown live on the only channel available, the officers would sit long after lunch in mess TV room to watch the cricket. There would be heated discussion and lively conversations at the end of every day test match. Tennis was a popular game among majors and above, seldom a subaltern would be seen at a tennis court, perhaps the only exception being the tennis courts at SAAA Mess during the basic course. Squash was very popular among the officers, all messes of AA had at least one squash court, few of them were having net rather than ceiling. These squash courts would remain open till late night, with subalterns knocking alone. Commanding officers at squash courts were the regular playing members and it was a matter of pride for a subaltern if he can beat his commanding officer in the court; it seldom happened.

**Subedar Ghulam Haider** (late) of **74 LAA** was an outstanding basketball player of the era, he represented his regiment at army

and national level, he was member of army basketball team which won eleven gold medals in national games between 1985-2001. He was also member of the team which won eight gold medals in inter services basketball championship from 1985-1995. He died of cardiac arrest on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008 while performing routine regiment duties. **Subedar Major Inam Ul Haq of 97 LAA** was a good athlete, 400 and 800 meters being his field, he won gold and silver medals in inter-centre sports in 1986, his high point of sporting career was gold medal in 4 hundred meters relay in national and army championship in 1988 and 1990.

***Havildar Diryafat sports star of Sher-e-Jhang participated in Asian Games, National Games and won 4 Gold, 13 Silver, 4 Bronze medals at international level.***

### **Army Air Defence**

In 1989, Anti-Aircraft Command was transitioned into Army Air Defence with its own identity and entity, it will be fielding a separate team in army sports championships; previously sportsmen from AA form members of corps of artillery teams. From 1987 onwards new raisings took place, these regiments were Radar Controlled Guns (RCG), their authorised manpower was less than LAA and MAA regiments. New Air Defence (AD) brigades were also raised, one each with an infantry corps, it allowed AD sportsmen to have a wide arena more opportunities to compete and tougher opponents from infantry and armoured regiments. New sports were introduced in the army including baseball and sailing. Initially brigades were changed into AD Groups and regiments were also renumbered thus 5 LAA became 1<sup>st</sup> AD Regiment and subsequently 52 MAA became 10 AD Regiment in July 1991. In 1993, old numbering was restored in Air Defence and regiments reverted back to their original names and numbers.

Air Defence Divisions were raised in 1989 as groups and in 1995 re-designated as 3 Air Defence Division and 4 Air Defence Division, this facilitated having sports meet and competitions at divisional level. New sports facilities were constructed, proper sports grounds were inaugurated at Sargodha and Malir, sports championships became more intense, competitive, lively and interesting, aim still remained the same to promote physical fitness among soldiers.

In Sargodha, sports stadium construction under self help was initiated under Brigadier Burki (Brigade commander) task was given to 124 SCR Regiment, stadium itself was inaugurated by COAS General Aslam Baig on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1989 and named as **Major General Moin (Shaheed) Stadium**. In Karachi, **Jinnah Sports Stadium** was also built on self help basis by the AD Division, on the same very ground where in 1948 Quaid-e-Azam came to visit 5 HAA Regiment. Now it has two basketball courts, football ground and jogging track as well. This ground used to be dusty and sandy, however it remained as the main venue for all sports venues of AA from independence till today.

In 1991, newly raised **152 Lt AD Regt** won basketball championship for three consecutive years at Malir (1991-1993) under captaincy of Captain Khan. This sets in a basketball culture in the regiment, in 1998 Major Iftikhar Nadeem of this regiment represented army basketball team. Captain Shehzad of same regiment was also a member of army handball team in 1999. AD Regiments in Armoured formations competed within their divisions, **148 Gun Missile Regt (GM)** won handball trophy while serving in 10 Armoured Brigade in 1992, regiment retained its supremacy in handball in 12 Armoured Brigade as well. **67 (SP) Lt AD Regt** won overall best unit of 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Division in sports in 1997, Kabbadi (Asian style) and inter-zonal volley ball championship was won by **19 (SP) Lt AD Regt** between 2004-2007. It is worth highlighting

that 127 Med won six consecutive 3 AD Division sports champion trophy.

**Naib Subedar Abid Rashid** of 104 Lt AD excelled at national level in canoeing, he won bronze medal in 1997 and 1998 National Canoeing Championship and silver medals in 1999 and 2000 in same category. Driver (DMT) Shehram Ali of 127 MAA also won a gold medal in National Rowing Championship. Lance Naik Sajid Hussain of 143 LAD also won a gold and two silver medals while being member of Army Sailing Team at national level.

### **Sports during War on Militancy**

From 2001, Pakistan faced unprecedented hostilities internally and externally, a wave of terror including suicide attacks, IEDs blasts and attacks on the uniform persons took place. Army formations were deployed in the tribal areas and troubled areas of Balochistan and Swat. This situation affected the routine working of regiments and sports competitions were curtailed briefly. Security was beefed up and entrance to cantonments for civilians was scrutinized and restricted. The positive aspect was that new and improved sports facilities were created within cantonments and physical fitness became very important; every regiments now have a gymnasium of its own for the troops. New sports with bias towards martial arts were introduced in AD like judo, wushu, karate. Most important and prestigious PACEs were introduced at army level in 2011. Havildar Shah Nawaz of 88 LAD secured 1<sup>st</sup> position in MP5A2 Para Match (group II) meet in 2007, he was awarded with a champion trophy and 12 Bore double barrel rifle by President Pervez Musharraf. Lance Havildar Abdul Waheed of same regiment was a playing member of gold medal winning army football team in National Games 2001.

**Naib Subedar Ashan Ahmed of 134 (RCG)** won Army colour in Wushu. AD officers including Major Yawar (127 Med) and Major Ehsan Ullah (124 SCR) were given Army colours in cricket in 2004-05. **Naib Subedar Zulfiqar Ali of 144 Lt AD** was a playing member of army cricket team which won gold medal in inter services cricket championship 2003, Zulfiqar was also a playing member of the army team which won the same championship in 2013 as well. Mainly due to Zulfiqar, the regiment itself won Cricket Championship consecutively in 6 Armoured Division between 1997-2002. Regiment takes pride in the fact that Captain Naeem Aslam was given Army colours in cricket whereas, Captain Mohsin Malik, Havildar Zulfiqar Ali, Havildar Abdul Hameed, Havildar Azam Khan, Havildar Karamat Ali and Naik Arshad had represented Army in both cricket and baseball. Captain Babar Adeel Bhatti. Naik Arshad Hussain and OCUs Adnan Tahir and Ayaz Khan have been members of army baseball team . Lance Naik Adnan Ali is a popular and well like soldier in the unit more so because he won gold medal in Kabbadi while representing army in Inter Services Kabbadi Championship-2011. Regiment (144 Lt AD) also excelled in baseball being consecutive champions in 6 Armoured Division 1999-2001, Corps Reserve Champions 2003, 2005, 2007 and then champion in 2009 while being part of 26 Mechanized Division.

Tennis, hockey, swimming, boxing alongwith other sports were back on regimental and divisional sports calendar by 2011. Tennis was dominated by **95 Lt AD** winning both singles and doubles finals in 2012.

**Lance Havildar Farooq Khan of 146 LAD (GM/SP)** first earned his army colour in baseball in 2001 when army won gold medal in National Baseball Championship-2001 and he remained part of the army baseball team till 2013, in between six gold and four silver medals including a silver at Bangkok. Another regiment

which has excelled in baseball is 67(SP) Lt AD. Major Omar Bashir has quite a contribution in the sports excellence of ‘Sattath’.

Army Air Defence Command lays great importance to sports among its regiments, as the nature of operational task depends primarily upon the reflexes of the firer. There are annual sports championships and trophies for the burst sportsmen and regiments. In 2009, the very first Colonel in Chief trophy was won by 142 Lt AD (SAM) Regt .

In 2018 a new sports policy was formulated with an aim to revive the sports culture in the aftermath of prolonged war on militancy. Regiments have their inter battery competitions and regimental teams participate in brigades competitions. Brigades compete for AD Divisional sports trophies and AD Regiment teams are selected by the AD Divisions which competes at Army Level competitions.

The sports culture by and large is the same as in 1950, present day soldiers are physically more fit so are the officers. Every regiment has a gymnasium and troops take pride in building their body muscles. Inclination is more towards the martial sports, games which are rough and tough. Every regiment has its own track suit, the new pattern of uniform is another contributing factor in allowing physical activities around the clock.

## Chapter Thirteen

### Army Air Defence in Aid of Civil Power

Army by virtue of its manpower, equipment, training and discipline is the most well equipped organisation to meet any challenge in addition to its primary role of safeguarding national sovereignty. Pakistan on independence lacked the requisite resources to meet all the daunting tasks of a new nation, first and foremost was the rehabilitation of refugees.

5 HAA Regiment soon after independence in September 1948 established a Chak 'Punj Heavy' at Multan for the refugees and till 1955 regularly visited the Chak and assisted them with food and in setting up the agriculture infra structure.<sup>192</sup> By 1953, 3 Army Group Royal Artillery (Anti Aircraft) was the major formation in Karachi and as such responsible for all ceremonial parades and also the main force in aid of civil power.

Karachi faced an unpleasant situation with the students of different local colleges and schools duly mixed up with elements creating dis-order in the city. Troops of 5 HAA, 13 LAA, 19 LAA and 20 HAA were called in aid of the civil authorities in the restoration of peace and order on 8<sup>th</sup> January 1953. *Brigadier Elliot, Commander 3 AGPRA (AA) in his capacity as station commander duly assisted by his BM Major Nazir and other officers of the local RPA units, took control of the situation. The situation was brought under control by 13<sup>th</sup> January 1953 with the troops of all the four RPA units and PAOC centre and the local infantry battalion returning to camp and Malir respectively. The situation in Karachi was so well managed and controlled that it did not interfere with the practice camp and earned the gratitude of peace loving locals and applause by both the civil and military authorities in Karachi.*<sup>193</sup>

192 5 HAA Digest of Service

193 3 AGPRA (AA) Digest of Service



Karachi was the federal capital and as such, it again flared up in February 1953. *Some trouble was again apprehended in Karachi due to all parties Anti Ahmadya agitation. On 26 February 1953, HQ was alerted and one Regiment moved to Transit Camp. On 27 February, tactical HQ moved to Ministry of Defence and more regiments moved to Transit Camp. The trouble was expected to be on a very large scale so a battalion was moved to Karachi from Hyderabad. Except a few demonstrations at Prime Ministe's House, nothing occurred on a large scale. The situation finally was well in hand, on 2<sup>nd</sup> March when the HQ moved back along with the AA regiments.*<sup>194</sup>

On 29<sup>th</sup> January 1954, the labour at Karachi Dockyard went on a strike, 3 AA Brigade was called in aid of civil power. *Our troops helped to load / un load the ships arriving / going out of Karachi harbour and thus saved the Karachi Port Trust and the country from facing a great loss.*<sup>195</sup>

On 7<sup>th</sup> October 1958, Martial Law was declared in the country, *Troops under command of this HQ moved out to Karachi in aid of civil power consequent upon declaration of Martial Law by the President of Pakistan. Lieutenant Colonel YS Nanjiani, Officiating Commander was appointed 'B' Sector Commander of A Zone (Fedral Area Karachi Malir). Sector HQ was established in Jamshed Quarters Police Station, New Town Area.*<sup>196</sup> Troops returned to barracks on 13<sup>th</sup> November 1958.

**In East Pakistan**, 43 LAA remained deployed from 1969-1971, regiment apart from its military duties also played an important role in winning the heart and mind of the locals. On 11 November 1970 a massive cyclone 'Bhola Cyclone' of Category Three hit the

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194 3 AGRPA(AA) Digest of Service

195 3 AGRPA (AA) Digest of Service

196 3 AGRPA (AA) Digest of Service

Chittagong and surrounding areas killing over half a million people. 43 LAA was at Dacca Airport and conducted the relief mission by loading the relief goods and conducting the relief agencies. Internal Security Duties included smooth flow of first ever General Elections in designated AOR of East Pakistan. One battery was deployed at Ghoripur (Mymen Singh) which was assigned the responsibility of maintaining Law and Order during the Elections.

### **Bobby Go Ahead**

In East Pakistan the situation turned from bad to worse in March 1971 when the announced inaugural session of national assembly at Dacca was postponed. 43 LAA was at Dacca Airport and as such was responsible for the safety of visiting politicians and military dignitaries. By virtue of being deployed at the airfield and having the firepower more than any other regiment in Dacca put 43 LAA as frontline unit in the face of any untoward incident. Major Arif Hameed (retired) narrates , *‘ on the evening of 24<sup>th</sup> March 1971, I was called by commanding officer and briefed that an aircraft might land in the evening so be prepared. I already had a small team from the three batteries for the cordon and defence of PIA aircraft thus it was no major issue. A PIA aircraft did arrived and soon a Cortina car approached from the city and parked at the stairways . I was standing very close and saw General President Yahya Khan stepping out from car and calmly stepping up to the aircraft and soon the jet took off’* .

Bobby Go Ahead, was the code word for the start of Operation Search Light. Major Arif received the orders to clear the Farm Gate, the gateway to the cantonment and airfield. It was blocked by the insurgents who were also occupying the nearby buildings having small arms weapons. Thus it was 43 LAA which fired the opening round of the counter insurgency in East Pakistan, the Gun position

B-5 fired a round of 37mm to take on the suspected machine gun position of Mukti Bahani and later troops of 43 LAA removed barricades at Farm Gate.

**Operation “Allah Di”.** 43 LAA was the first of the AA Unit to be employed in ground role, it carried out raids and operations against rebels. The area Allah Di was thickly populated with anti-state elements who were fully armed with automatic weapons and had prepared defenses using the natural obstacle of a river and water logged area. The Commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Shafaat Ali along with the Commander Artillery Eastern Command Brigadier S.S.A Qasim supervised the operation. Although about 100 rebels were killed and few captured, yet not a single child woman or innocent person was hurt. The area was brought under state control after a tough fight on difficult terrain crossing a big natural obstacle such as Mirpur River under heavy fire by the rebels. The other major action was undertaken by the unit in gen area Tongi where a train was derailed and went hostage under armed rebellions. The unit was entrusted the task of clearing the area. For this purpose a company of Frontier Force Regiment was put under command. The operation was planned and supervised by Lieutenant Colonel Shafaat. A tough battle for about four hours continued in adverse climatic conditions. About 60 miscreants were eliminated and area brought under state control. Again during this operation not a single child, woman, old man or innocent Bengali was hurt. The injured rebels were provided with medical treatment available in the area arranged on humanitarian grounds.<sup>197</sup> Gunner Muhammad Akbar, after putting up a brave fight with rebels got martyred.

After Mujib’s announcement of disobedience campaign, unit took the administration of the Airfield in its own hands. Officers on duty greeted leaders arriving at the Airport and briefed them on the ongoing situation. A total of 5 attacks on the Airfield took place by rebels which included a combined strength of 500 men. All attacks

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<sup>197</sup> War Diary 43 LAA, Digest of Service 43 LAA.

were repelled and Gunner Mumtaz Hussain was martyred during the attacks. In order to win over the hearts of the locals, Lieutenant Colonel Shafaat Ali volunteered that his regiment would adopt three orphan boys from the village Allah Di. The boys aged 8, 10 and 11 were taken by regiment. The boys stayed with the regiment when it returned to Karachi in November 1971. After the birth of Bangladesh, the two elder ones returned to their homes. The youngest Aslam, stayed on and became a member of mess staff.<sup>198</sup>

160 LAA Battery was entrusted with the task of enrolling, motivating, and training of patriotic Bengalis and Beharis into a force called Razakars. 161 LAA Battery was entrusted with the task of enrolling, training and activating eight Mujahid Companies to supplement ground forces at Dacca Air field.

### **Floods -1973**

In summer of 1973, the country was hit with one of the worst floods in its history, every regiment of AA took part in the relief operations. 102 LAA performed the flood relief duties from 8 August 1973 to 3 September 1973. *Regiment was given responsibility of protecting the Sukkur Barrage from breach of both sides of the river. All ranks displayed a high standard of strength and stamina and succeeded in keeping the Bunds and Barrage intact. The unit spent a period of 96 hours without any rest or sleep.*<sup>199</sup>

### **Islamic Summit -1974**

During Islamic leader's conference in 1974 at Lahore, the 36 LAA was assigned the responsibility to provide air defence to Punjab Assembly Hall, Badshahi Masjid and Lahore Fort. The unit not only provided air defence to assigned assets but also hosted the Uganda's President Idi Amin. Major Hafeez Ullah Khattak

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<sup>198</sup> 43 LAA Digest of Service.

<sup>199</sup> 102 LAA Digest of Service

performed the duties of Acting Military Secretary to President of Syria Hafiz Asad.<sup>200</sup>

## **Elections and Martial Law – 1977**

1977 is a troubled year in our history, the very first general elections after the 1970, were soon turned into mass agitation which finally led to imposition of Martial Law in the country. On 19 March 1977, while 307 Independent AA Battery (now part of 147 Lt AD) was employed on Internal Security Duties at District West Karachi, some miscreants set ablaze Republic Motor Factory in its area of responsibility. *The gallant men under the leadership of Major Muhammad Zulfiqar Arshad acted promptly and took over the charge of fire fighting operation. Relentless and timely action by all ranks saved public property worth more than 30 million rupees. This action was appreciated at all levels and top civil and military leadership visited the troops including Mr Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Chief Minister Sindh, Mr Farooq Ahmed Leghari, Minister of Production and Lieutenant General Jehanzeb Arbab, Commander 5 Corps.* Following awards were conferred to the battery:-

### **Tamgha-e-Basalat (T Bt)**

- (a) PSS-8320 Major Muhammad Zulfiqar Arshad
- (b) PA-16536 Captain Muhammad Aslam
- (c) No 2967241 Gunner Khushi Muhammad

## **Karachi. 1985-2015**

Every AD Regiment during its tour of duty at Karachi invariably had to perform the internal security duties to maintain peace in the city. **58 Med** remained employed on IS duties in Karachi in District

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200 36 LAA Digest of Service

South from June 1992 - October 1993 and also December 1993 - November 1994. While performing IS duties at Karachi in July 1994: Captain (Lieutenant Colonel) Muhammad Wasim Yaqub and Havildar (Naib Subedar retired) Khushi Muhammad were awarded **Tamgha-e-Basalat** for their valiant action against dacoits in an armed encounter.<sup>201</sup>

In 1992, The **36 Lt** was on internal security duties at Karachi. During one such internal security duty Lance Havildar Naseer was hit with four bullets while chasing robbers but due to his courage and bravery, caught those robbers and put them in front of law. He was awarded **Tamga-e-Basalat**. Major Saeed Ahmed (PA 22099) of 141 AD Regiment lost his life while chasing a gang of kidnappers in Karachi in August 1994, he was decorated with Tamgha Shujaat.

**WAPDA Duty.** Regiments of AAD carried out Internal Security (WAPDA) duties from January 1999 to July 1999. The main aim of this duty was to generate revenue, discourage malpractices and improved customer services of WAPDA for general public. At Karachi, the Karachi Electric Supply Corporation (KESC) was in red due to power theft and non payment of bills. 45 AD Brigade undercommand Brigadier Irfan was given the task to 'bring the situation to a point where KESC can be sold'. Brigadier Irfan highlights, *'the main issue was the power theft mafia which included big industrialists groups and individual houses. A detailed planning was carried out, teams of AD Troops carried out reconnaissance and later they raided the points, it was quite risky and dangerous keeping in mind the volatile political situation of the city. However we managed to bring down the losses from 58% to 17 %'*. It is worth highlighting that Brigadier Irfan was given a COAS Commendation Card for his excellent performance.

**Desilting.** In 2000, regiments of AAD participated in desilting duty at all canals of Pakistan, specially in Punjab which over a

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201 58 MAA Digest of Service

period of time have accumulated silt. 154 Lt AD Regt performed the duty of 'Bhal Safai in Ahmedpur, and in Sadiqabad. 152 Lt AD Regt on the other hand 'participated in desilting duty at Muzaffargarh and Khangarh and performed splendidly with combined efforts of all ranks' 145 Lt AD Regt conducted de-silting operations in District Bhakkar. *Local newspapers and all notables of the area appreciated the dedication of the unit in carrying out the assigned task amicably.*<sup>202</sup>

**Forestation.** 144 Lt LAD was given a national level project to carryout forestation in Sheikhupura (Bansi Nagar, Coro Tana and Warburton) from May 1996 to March 2003. Unit carried out forestation on following scale:- Bansi Nagar (330 Acres, Coro Tana 412 and 30 kilometres along railway line in Warburton)

**Earthquake-2005.** On the morning of 8<sup>th</sup> October 2005, Pakistan was hit with the most devastating earthquake in its history; Northern Areas including Kashmir was the worst hit. 159 Lt AD was deployed at Kashmir, it lost its 12 men in the initial few minutes as buildings collapsed. Major (retired) Mahboob Haider of AD was among the fatal casualties of Al Mustafa Towers at Islamabad. Troops of AAD later performed rescue and rehabilitation duties in the affected areas.

**Floods 2010.** On account of heavy rains, floods in River Indus and flash flood of Hill Torrents during 2010, 122 villages out of 197 (61% area) of Tehsil Taunsa got effected and colossal loss occurred to crops, houses and properties. Most of the area was flooded due to Indus River which enters from Trimmu in the north and leaves Tehsil Taunsa after crossing Taunsa Barrage in the south.; 148 Lt LAD Regiment unit carried out flood duties at District Dera Ghazi Khan, Tehsil Taunsa from 27 July 2010 - 31 October 2010. Operation Labbaik was in three Phases (Rescue phase from 31 July 2010 - 22 August 2010, Relief phase from 23 August 2010 - 13 September

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202 145 AD Digest of Service.

2010 and rehabilitation phase from 15 September 2010 - 31 October 2010).

## **Elections and Census**

Army Air Defence took an active part in the two Census (1998 and 2017) and the general elections from 1990-2018. In Census, the AD regiments were assigned the areas of operations and after necessary training and briefing they worked with the civil departments, visiting each and every house and building to enter the data and particulars of individuals.

Elections are to a great extent in our country always a matter of controversy, losing candidate seldom has no hesitation in blaming the civil authorities and his rivals of using unfair means. Army is one institution on which the public have great and impeachable trust. Other issue is the law and order at the polling stations. All AD regiments in one way or the other has been assisting the civil authorities in holding free and fair elections. In the 2018 General Elections a monitoring camp was established at AAD Command, equipped with communication and media facilities. Aim was to ensure the free and fair elections through elimination of violence by political contestants at polling stations.



## *Chapter Fourteen*

### **Army Air Defence Messes**

Mess is an institution, home of bachelor officers and hub of social activities in the garrison. There are certain rules, regulations and above all customs of services which are the bloodline of mess life. Mess is not merely a place to eat, dine or sleep rather it is a sacred place where decorum has to be observed at all times. Presently Army Air Defence have own messes at Warsak, Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Lahore, Sahiwal, Multan, Mailsi and three messes at Karachi namely School of Army Air Defence, 4 Dots Mess and Army Air Defence Centre Mess. Army Air Defence regiments at other stations are part of either a division or a corps and as such do not maintain independent mess.

#### **Malir - 4 Dots Mess**

Malir Cantonment (Karachi) is the home of Anti-Aircraft, the very birth of anti-aircraft in sub-continent took place at Malir; thus the oldest mess of AAD is at Malir. Karachi at one time had a mess in Clifton as well but it was only at regimental level. The present Four Dots Mess is in fact the oldest mess of Army Air Defence, It was used as the mess for the both AA Regiments after independence, it also served as Transit Mess for a brief time. After raising of 3 AGRPA in 1950 it became an exclusive AA Mess. The Coastal Artillery which was raised in 1889 was disbanded and its manpower was merged into the 5 HAA, thus the mess equipment of Coastal Artillery was also added into the AA Mess. In 1950-51, after the raising of the AA School in Malir, the students and instructors were also accommodated in this mess. This mess was the most lively mess among all messes at Malir , hosting lunch and dinner to dignitaries. On the 10<sup>th</sup> January 1951 General Sir Douglas Gracy, the outgoing

Commander-in-Chief Pakistan Army paid a farewell visit to the units in the Malir Station. He was later a guest in this mess for a farewell lunch. In October 1951, *AA units in the station entertained Lieutenant General Otto Lound K.C.B, D.S.O the Master Gunner at a grand dinner.*<sup>203</sup> General Otto was on a tour from UK. *Other thing where we served on offices of other two AGRPA's was the uniform team one of all AA officers during dinner night and other functions. AA officers in their new mess kit were the smartest lot. Commander was really pleased and proud of his officers over this uniformity and smartness of his offices dress.*

Till 1971 when the 3 AA Brigade moved out from Malir, this mess hosted lunch and dinner to General Ayub Khan (C-n-C ) Muhammad Ali Bogra the Prime Minister of Pakistan and to a galaxy of dignitaries. Dinner and Guest Nights were a regular affair in the mess, both had a well laid rites and customs including drinking of toasts to the King and Governor General. The practice is still in vogue however now instead of hard drink it is sharbat and for the health of president of the country.

### **School of Army Air Defence Mess**

The students attending and undergoing courses at the SAAA were also accommodated at present day Four Dots Mess. In 1966 a barrack in SAAA was converted into a mess for the students however it was for consuming lunch only. *During the Basic Course we students were instructed to consume our lunch in the School, as it saved the time in going back to the main AA Mess. Our own batman would bring our lunch from the main mess and we would use our own tiffin and crockery, the tables were folding and we had few chairs. One day during the lunch, one of the student Captain Saleem who was rather a tall officer, stretched his legs, they struck*

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<sup>203</sup> 3 AGRPA Digest of Service.

*the folding legs of adjoining tables and resultantly the lunch of the entire course was spread on floor.*<sup>204</sup>

General (retired) Ehsan also recalls, *We used to live in the main mess, it was hot in summer thus our batman would place the tubular charpoy in the open verandah or in the open space with a mosquito net. It was quite a scene to have a dozen such charpoy with white cotton sheets in a symmetrical pattern. Television was a new addition to the mess life and eagerly watched by all, seniors sitting in the front and juniors occupying the rear chairs. It was also placed in the open space.*

In 1977, the present mess of the school was commissioned; the most modern mess of the Malir Garrison. It brought quite a revolution in the life pattern of the students. Brigadier Irfan (retired) narrates, *'I was posted in the School after the termination of the Gunnery Staff Course, this mess was newly commissioned, Colonel Iltaf was the commandant, one day myself and Captain Manzoor Abbasi (Brigadier retired) were tasked to go to city and find a canvas water pipe for watering of the mess lawn, we were also to make purchases for the mess which included a thermos, few bed sheets and some suitable tea cups apart from finding reasonable glass items which can be utilized in making a chandelier for the ante-room. We searched through the old bazar and found the canvas pipe and glassware for the mess, also bought the thermos for the guest room and returned back to the mess in the evening, commandant was waiting for us, he showed great pleasure on our shopping and had a cup of tea with us. Colonel Iltaf was very keen on developing the mess lawn'.*

By early eighties, the Mess was well established, food standard remained a sour point despite keen efforts of all the mess staff. On

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204 Lieutenant General retired Iftikhar Hussain Shah narrates

days when there was a cricket or hockey match being shown live, the TV room would be jam packed with lively commentary and expert advice from all present. During the course very few students consumed breakfast in the mess in order to save time. Thus a student breakfast was served in the room, which universally comprised of a paratha, luke warm tea and a cold omelet or fried egg. Batman would bring this, in a tiffin and thermos to the room. However lunch in the mess was a mandatory rite of the students and dinner in the room ;again time saving was the main consideration. Students were not allowed to use the ante room or the ladies room during their course duration. The mess had two tennis courts which were seldom utilized. Weather was an issue beyond the control of anyone so was the supply of water for the BOQs. It was a common feature among the students to sleep on the roof during hot weather and recite the lessons before falling to sleep. However presently, it has overcome all such obstacles and now living and studying during the courses is a good experience. Rooms are well laid, properly furnished with mosquito net and water supply has also improved.

Present day **Army Air Defence Centre Mess** was originally a divisional artillery mess of a field formation and was handed over to the centre on its raising.

### **Sargodha Mess**

Sargodha cantonment itself was constructed in 1974-75, before its commissioning the regiments were living in the Sultan Textile area near the PAF base. The present mess was commissioned in 1976, it had an ante room, a billiard room (the standard recreation at that time) a television room, a dinning room, a ladies room, a library, and three guest rooms on the first floor. An adjoining large kitchen with pantry, and living quarters for the mess havildar and waiters. Sprawling lawn in the front and adjacent badminton and tennis courts. BOQs were just across the road. Initial furnishing was

carried out by the quartering branch of the army and rest was left to the formation. COAS General Zia Ul Haq, was the very first army chief to honour this mess during his visit to Sargodha in 1976. In 1985, CJSF General Muhammad Iqbal stayed a night in the mess. The upper floor presently AGRPA 1 was the sole VVIP guest room, it had a colour television, a small fridge and a window airconditioner; to fulfill the requirements to be labelled as a VVIP guest room.

### **Rawalpindi Anti Aircraft Mess**

Originally constructed as a brigade mess with quite an area which allowed extensions and expansions over the year. This mess was home to many officers posted in GHQ apart from the own Ack Ack officers. There were two sets of BOQs, a squash court, tennis court and wide parking lot. In the mid seventies and eighties, it would reach its peak capacity during the Pakistan day Parade in March, which was held in the present day Polo Ground in Rawalpindi; almost all intelligence corps officers would stay in this mess for that duration. Water shortage was an issue then and at present it has been resolved to a great extent. One famous episode was in 1985, when Captain Salik Nawaz Cheema (SJ, Shaheed) had to whisk away the visitor book from the mess in a commando style operation which involved detail planning and deception. Reason was that Captain Salik had written some suggestions on the visitor book and later realising his mistake decided to altogether remove the book itself. After three weeks of frenzied search by mess staff, he finally handed over the book to Mess Havildar Maqbool, 'I simply could not resist the request from him' were his remarks.

### **Sahiwal Mess**

This is a regimental mess, as sole AA Regiment is the only military entity in the area. This mess has retained its original design and layout over the period of time. The city and mess have a historic distinction being so close to the ancient ruins of Harrappa.

## **Warsak Mess**

Warsak Garrison is also an exclusive AA station. Being far from the city and among a rather unpredictable environment due to close proximity to Western Borders; the Mess attains a special place. It is a well laid out mess with a swimming pool, tennis court, library (one of the best among all messes) gymnasium, billiard room and well furnished ante room.

## **Field Mess**

Field Mess is rather the heart of mess life, it is an integral establishment of every AA Regiment, they serve tea etc. During the working hours during peace time and in exercises and during operational deployment they prepare and serve food around the clock. In field, the mess is established under canvas, well dug in with enough space to accommodate all officers for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Tables and chairs are field issued equipment, mess havildar make the purchases from the nearest place and food is prepared by the mess cook under a canvas. It is in the field that the true importance of mess is understood, a good food is a morale booster for all and to prepare such food is the hallmark of a good mess cook. It must be noted that many of our present day culinary dishes in vogue like Mulligatawny Soup, Lemon Soufflé are all invented in the field messes of army. In the field, a mess cook experiments with the whatever he has and end products are always appreciated by the officers. When an AAD Battery is deployed independently then officers of the battery dines from the soldiers mess. Field Mess has its own culture, it has its own rules and customs, certainly they are more relaxed than regular messes yet they observe certain dress code. Words perhaps cannot do justice to the efforts and dedication of field mess staff, they work under adverse weather and ground layout with a happy and smiling face, a very strong bond thus develops among

the junior officers and the mess staff to an extent that when the same officer rises to higher ranks the first person he often inquires about on posting in or during visit to his regiment is the old mess waiter.

During peacetime, the field mess is known as Officers Tea Bar, initially the tea bars had wooden chairs, a table, regimental shields and above all a wooden book rack in which books issued by army were properly placed. It was forbidden for young officers to sit in it other than the tea break time. Tea Break is an important ritual in the regiment, troops are issued with free tea break made by the Soldiers Mess and officers pay for their own tea break. Tea Break is observed at 1030-1100 hours, all officers are seated and after arrival of commanding officer the tea break is served. A proper menu is prepared which till last millennium was quite traditional, channa chat, dehi ballay, Dacca Chicken, samosa, and Chicken Tikka was the standard fare. With the incoming of frozen food the tea break also underwent the change and now it can have anything from pizza to nuggets. Tea Break serves as an important break which allows the officers to communicate with each other and allows commanding officer to interact with undercommand in an informal manner. Any officer coming back from leave including the commanding officer is traditionally bound to bring the sweets, any officer blessed with a child, a good course report, achievement in sports all deserves special tea breaks. Officers are often reminded in mild manner for committing any breach of customs like using wrong pattern of ink for signing a letter, wearing a pip in wrong style; by being fined with a tea break. At times an officer under cloud is often rescued by second in command through a good tea break. Many of the applications for army aviation and SSG has been approved by the commanding officers in tea bar with a smile.

Tea Bars in AD have their own specialties, the Paste Coffee, Lemonade with foam, Cold Chicken, handmade mango ice cream

are few examples; among these, handmade ice cream is now a rarity. The field mess is managed through a field mess secretary and a mess havildar along with few waiters. Presently these tea bars are also serving as Regimental History Room, conference room, study room and a place to relax. Few stations have more space like Peshawar, Karachi, Mailsi thus affording the AD Regiments to display their silver in tea bars, other stations like Sargodha and Gujranwala have small rooms for tea bars.

## **Mess Life**

Mess and mess life has undergone transition in line with the other development and changes in army life over the last seven decades. In the early days the mess design and pattern was such that bachelor officers' quarters were also sited close, yet these BOQs were never part of the mess administration. A mess had and still have a mess secretary to look after the affairs, it is true that this is one appointment which is seldom acknowledge by the dinning members. There are few cooks, few waiters, majority of them attached from the regiments, because mess own establishment of manpower is always short . president Mess Secretary (PMC) is a commanding officer and always chosen from the same regiment which is given the responsibility to run the mess. Thus, as per tradition, the mess is given to any of the regiment for a period of half year to look after its daily affairs.

Till the arrival of the Television , radio and record player was the entertainment, 4 Dot Mess had one of the finest collection of records at that time. Television brought a revolution in messes, even TV was till 1977 was Black and White and had limited operating hours 1800-2230 hours, with a weekly movie. Live transmission was very rare and almost exclusive to show the boxing matches of Muhammad Ali, Hockey matches of Pakistan, the first live Cricket



transmission was in 1977 when Pakistan won a match in Australia. Video Cassette Recorder (VCR) was a landmark change in mess culture, initially messes were not allowed to purchase a VCR but by mid eighties they were allowed to use it on weekly basis and to screen only English movies. The one major impact of the VCR was that soon video libraries were established in the messes; VCR was replaced by Compact Disc and they faded the VCRs to oblivion. Satellite Receiver in 1990s was another landmark change in mess culture, it was a positive change as it broaden the horizon of the officers by bringing the world media into the mess. Gulf War of 1990 was seen live by the officers and heated debates over the tactics, strategy and weapon system ensued among all.

In 1977 the liquor was banned in the country and all messes simply destroyed the liquor. This was the most drastic change in mess culture. Before this abolishment, there used to be a bar in every mess and officers were allowed a certain amount of beer which at times was enhanced on doctor's prescription. At lunch, beer was a prefer drink and at evening a bit hard drink was the customary drink. In 2019, smoking has been banned in the messes and in all military buildings. Thus the transition from past has been completed and a new face of mess life has emerged which is much more healthy than the past. Another aspect of the mess life was the Card Games more specifically the Bridge, in every mess there used to be a card room with elaborate tables and siting arrangement. On weekends the Bridge would last till wee hours and room would be filled with smoke of pipe, cigars and cigarettes. Messes had beautiful cigar and cigarette cases, made of silver and engraved with AA insignias, so were the ashtrays. After formal dinner, the officers would sit in the ante room, drinks would be served alongwith the cigars. Cigarette brands were in relation to the rank structure, Dunhill was very popular brand but exclusive to the commanding officer and above, Gold Leaf was more popular and taken as officer's brand. The usual

custom was that an officer had to seek the permission of the senior most officer sitting to smoke; it was never refused. Other was that once a senior officer has lit his tobacco then all can smoke. However smoking was strictly prohibited in the dining hall, unless the senior allows it.

An officer on his first posting, adopts the regiment as his new home and mess is where he dines and spends most of his free time, which in any case is very rare. An officer on his first posting is dined-in and subsequently is dined out from the mess on his posting out. Dinning out is a custom and an essential rite of the officer life in every rank. A good dinner attended by families as well, followed by a farewell speech and presentation of the regiment shield by the commanding officer and a farewell souvenir by the officer as well. In the end an officer irrespective of his rank is given a Jolly Good Fellow treatment.

Mess Havildar used to be a powerful appointment especially for young officers, he as per the rules could advance them some money and adjust it in their accounts. In an era of non ATM , it was the great and perhaps the only hope for bachelors. Amount seldom exceeded rupees two hundred at times even rupees fifty was enough to put few litres of petrol on week end. By rules, a mess meeting is held every quarter in which all the dinning members attend and put forward their suggestions, it is chaired by the brigade commander. There is a difference between the dinning and non dinning members, as a matter of fact all officers are members of the mess but bachelors are regarded as the dinning members or the officers living in BOQs.

## **Covid-19 – Corona Virus**

In late December 2019 the reports first originated regarding a new virus being detected in Wuhan (China) and from then onward on a daily basis, it became the focus of World and till August 2020 has remained the main headline world over. This pandemic is the first of new millennium and as such with present means of social communication has been fought collectively by humans world over. From March 2020 when the USA initiated a lockdown thus suspending all flights to China and European Union, this pattern was soon adopted and practiced in other countries as well. In Pakistan, the much awaited 23<sup>rd</sup> March Joint Services Parade was cancelled , followed by closure of international air traffic. The very first case of Covid was tested positive in Pakistan on 26 February 2020.

On 27 March 2020 National Command Operation Centre (NCOC) was established by HQ AAD Command under Prime Minister directive, it was a very timely and wise act as it ensured close coordination between federal ministries, provinces and military for information collection, sharing which ultimately helps in decision making, while shortening decision loop. Mandate given to the NCOC was to synergize and articulate National Effort against COVID-19 consistent with stipulated ToR for informed decision making

Each country in the world adopted different strategy basing upon its economy and culture, Pakistan adopted Smart Lockdown policy, through a vigorous and effective information campaign the public was made aware of the danger and the simple precaution to be adopted. Also protective personal gear including masks were manufactured locally and imported in bulk thus distributing them to the public even in the remotest areas.

At NCOC an effective cell was created, To review the public health emergency with real time data, nationally, regionally and globally in order to make evidence-based decisions. NCOC was also task to produce a daily National Situation Report (SITREP) about spread and effect of disease and determine level of risk in Pakistan. NCOC also issue National Advisories on various aspects of disease outbreak, it also assess economic / security impact of the health crisis, including specific actions under consideration of the committee. NCOC was able to harness appropriate use of IT to efficiently collect, collate, analyze and disseminate information. NCOC also assess appropriate level of stockpiles for PPE, availability of essential commodities, medical and diagnostic equipment. To avoid duplication of effort, any committee to be constituted at Federal level, shall be cleared by the NCOC.

It goes to the credit of NCOC that it launched the most effective media campaign in our history as Lieutenant General Hamood highlighted, ‘ I was convinced from the onset that passing of correct and positive information regarding the pandemic to the public holds the key . In the initial days there was a confusion and misinformation for the reason that it was an unprecedented threat. The commercial media had no authentic reports but were telecasting sensationalism . On social media, it was being treated seriously and also in lighter vein as well. Thus one of my key point which I stressed to the federal ministers and provincial chief ministers was to have an effective , optimist media campaign’.

Awareness campaign by PTA and mainstream media to educate public in showing respect for frontline workers healing infected patients. In order to ensure proactive monitoring, a national tele helpline for healthcare workers is being established for registering complaints and their expedient resolution by government organizations Telehealth online ([www.telehealth.gov.pk](http://www.telehealth.gov.pk)) and Yaran

e Watan portal has been introduced to reduce doctor to patient gap ensuring accessibility of quality healthcare service even in far flung areas, thus reducing burden on hospitals / OPDs.

‘We Care’ national training campaign targeting over 100,000 frontline health workers including doctors, nurses, paramedics, and support staff from all over Pakistan designed by the MoH, in collaboration with WHO, UNICEF and ICRC. ‘Pak Neghyban’. A public utility app helps both emergency svc providers and public at large for identification of nearest available hospital showing the availability or otherwise of critical med facilities i.e beds and ventilators. ‘Pak Negeyban’ (1 million plus downloads thus far) which facilitates users in providing near real-time visibility of hospitals based on location. Colour coded status as per availability of beds / vents. Utilization of emergency response organizations like Chipa, Muhafiz, Eidhi and 1122 providing rescue services. NCOC was able to generate community mobilization in 66 Districts / 1500 Union Councils, besides arrangements of the provinces. A 250 beds Isolation Hospital & Infectious Treatment Centre (IHITC) with minor OT & diagnostics facility duly IT enabled was established at Islamabad.

TTQ (Tr, Trace and Quarantine). Test, Trace and Quarantine is the adopted path to contain disease while lockdown restrictions are easing. Real time reporting at national level of the COVID tests conducted, extent of COVID infections and corresponding deaths including HCWs as well were gathered, reported and policy guidelines of anti-COVID strategy were crafted to efficiently meet the threat COVID pandemic. Laboratory optimization. On the onset of COVID, only four laboratorys were functional with testing capacity of 472 x tests / day only, across Pakistan. Through effective risk stratification and rapidly evolving testing strategy, the daily testing has been ramped up to approximately 62550 per day (17 Jul

2020). Besides, additional labs from public as well as private sectors have also been added; increasing from 8 labs to 106 labs.

SOPs compliance being enforced through all means available to the state besides community mobilization and articulating Youth Volunteers. One of the biggest achievement of NCOC is that it made people even in village to pay a serious ear to the pandemic. Hotels, schools, colleges, universities, parks, cinemas, marriage halls, recreation places were all closed down. Private companies and government offices were being managed at low staff in order to maintain social distance. Covid -19 also affected daily life of regiments, soldiers and officers adjusted to working and operating under these environment. Parade and sports were curtailed, school of instructions courses were cancelled , leaves were also withheld and any soldier coming back from leave was quarantine in isolation building or room for 14 days. Yet , it did not affect the operational deployment and operational readiness of AD Regiments. In field regiments adopted new guidelines, Athwanja which is deployed in operational area carried out all the duties wearing PPE.

## **History of History**

*The recording of history has not been a solemn occupation with Pakistan Artillery. Some considered it a chore; but it is a necessary and a gainful one. History is memory recalled and its void an stunt the mental growth of an individual as of an organization. Could this failure to record history be attributed to characteristic gunner modesty? Not polite. In the early years we were too young to appreciate the value of our experience. However no such excuse is valid in respect of 1965 and 1971 wars. The unit histories, with a few remarkable exceptions, are crammed full with such events as sports and VIP visits. In most cases the experience of war has been dismissed in one sentence (Lieutenant General Azmat Baksh Awan, Colonel Commandant,*

Regiment of Artillery, writing in the preface of very first historical book of Pakistan Artillery **Izzat-O-Iqbal** in 1978) *This holds true in case of majority of Air Defence Regiments as well; they were part of Artillery during the two wars.*

Compilation of Air Defence's history was initiated by Lieutenant General Khateer in 2003 with Major General (retd) Agha and Brigadier (retd) Ayub contributing with short drafts. In 2006, General Ihsan as Colonel in Chief requested Major General Owais who was DG AAD to compile a history of the corps. In 2010 when Lieutenant General Owais took over the command of Air Defence he entrusted Brigadier Nazar Shams and later Lieutenant General Zameer continued the process with Brigadier Bashir as the compiler. In 2014, I, first heard about the compilation of Air Defence History through Brigadier Bashir, he invited me to the HQ AAD and we shared ideas. Next, I, heard was in January 2018 when I received a call from Brigadier Aiml on the issue. I met Commander Lieutenant General Hamood in July 2018 on the compilation of the book; I agreed to work as a volunteer on the project. It is a matter of great honour and pride to be associated with the compilation of the history of own regiment and corps. I was vetted by Lieutenant Generals Retired Khateer and Tahir Qazi, both interviewed me and saw my old work. This simply highlights the passion involved in the history of the regiment by retired officers. Later I met General retired Ehsan Ul Haq and Lieutenant General retired Iftikhar Hussain Shah.

When I started on this project I was unaware that it has taken so many years. My initial Idea was to redo the existing draft of hundred odd pages but then I opted to start from page one and thus present draft of 95,000 words spread over 650 pages took birth. A history book of own corps has to look into many facets, the aim of the book is to preserve its history, war accounts, foster the bindings, create pride among the officers and soldiers, attract young officers, act as

reference book. It has to be cleared by own military intelligence and Institute of Army Military History from security and historical aspects thus narration has to be presented in a precise manner.

I joined 58 MAA in September 1984; it was not my first choice as I had opted for infantry. However, as the days passed, I like so many other before me started falling in love with the regiment and a stage came, not very long where I could not think of living outside the regiment. This is the beauty of army life and Anti-Aircraft, the officers present in the regiment and at station (Sargodha) became the family.

### **Sargodha.**

Cantonment was operational since 1977 and so was the mess, there was only one brigade the famous 3 AA Brigade, three officers commanded it during this decade Brigadier Ayub Lilla, Brigadier Sardar Altaf and Brigadier Burki. The brigade commander also acted as the station commander and garrison commander as well.

There were only three Ack Ack Regiments on the station, 89 LAA, 127 MAA and 58 MAA apart from 123 C&R which none took it as a full fledged regiment, then there were Signals, EME Workshop and some elements of intelligence. One of the earliest briefings given to me was to keep away from these intelligence officers. Lieutenant Colonel Umar Hayat was our CO, soon he completed his command tenure and Lieutenant Colonel Sarwar (Brigadier retired) took over the command. Among the battery commanders were Major Tahir Qazi (Lieutenant General retired) Major (late) Mahboob Haider, major Mussrat Khalique, Major Alvi, Major Abrar ul Waheed and Major Javed Riaz Khan, later Major Ashraf Saleem (lieutenant general retired) also served as battery commander. Among the captains, Intisar was the senior most followed by Captain Faheem (late) and Captain Zulfiqar Hussain Shah. In terms of lieutenants there was



a long list topped by Lieutenant Suhail Bashir followed by Khalid Raja, Tariq Butt, Samee Khan, Ghulam Ali Mughul, Mahmood ul Islam, Farooq Leghari and Mustaq Ahmed. Our second in command was initially Major Wahid , later Major Sarwar performed the duties. To me Lieutenant Colonel Sarwar Jhora, my commanding officer remains an ideal figure, he was as I came to know now, stood first in his basic course, qualified on MAA Guns from China but above all it was his personality, aura, grace, humbleness, openness, honesty, alongwith his personal discipline which has remained a beacon for me and many others. Lieutenant Colonel Ilyas was next, a literary, philosophical, qualified on 57mm from China , prolific writer and narrator of Punjabi literature; he later raised 141 GM to whom he gave the title of 'Karman Vali', his son also later commanded the same regiment.

Later after a year during which I attended my YO course; I received a movement order all of a sudden to attend the Giraffe Radar Cadre at Westridge (November 1985). It was the very first piece of modern equipment and later modernization to arrive in Pakistan. We were eighteen officers and I was the junior most, whereas Captain Babur (Brigadier retired) was the course senior. Another notable officer was Lieutenant Saleem Raza (Major General retired) Captain Amir Yaqub, Captain Hamid Usman (both retired brigadiers) and above all Captain Salik Nawaz Cheema was present and I have the honour to be his tent mate and room mate for next eight months before setting course for SSG. We all were living in tents at Ojhari Camp, Giraffe was at present day HQ AAD which was then HQ AA Command. For our transportation we had a military truck. Two civilian instructors from Sweden were staying at Inter-Continental Hotel. We thus had a whole day of instruction, Giraffe was parked next to the GOCs office and during day he (Major General Agha) would visit randomly. Major Khateer (Lieutenant General retired) was the officer in charge of our training. He was living at Wah and travel daily on his Suzuki Fx, our truck would occasionally get

late in arriving at Westridge but not even once I saw him (Major Khateer) late: he was source of inspiration for the entire course. He was the most talked about officer among us youngsters due to his good attitude and above all his knowledge, he is a graduate from Camberly.

After a month or two, the Swedish instructors left and we were at our own with Giraffe, we travelled to different army corps and airbases highlighting the capabilities before settling at K Area. 41 MAA was deployed and we came under their administrative control. Myself and Captain Salik were the permanent crew along with Captain Amir Yaqub (Later Brigadier retired). It was a good, new and pleasant experience to be with 41 MAA undercommand Lieutenant Colonel Ayub with Captain Rashid Rafi as adjutant.

After six months officers were sent to Sweden for training came back which included Captain Ajmal Zafar Cheema as well (Brigadier retired). Captain Zafar had quite a number of followers in AA then, mainly for the reason that he seems to be years ahead of us subalterns, he was the first officer probably in the army to have a Walkman.

Grooming of an officer takes place around the clock, in the working hours the atmosphere was strict and after parade hours it was rather relaxed. Major J.R.A.Khan played a key role not in my life but also in many other young officers in understanding that there is a difference between the parade hours and off parade hours; and both should not be mixed. He was absolutely strict during the day and in the evening he was a best friend. Major Tanveer Talat was another officer in the station who was adhering to what we subalterns considered Old Norms then. Major Tahir Qazi (Lieutenant General retired) was fond of tennis and would sneak out to the mess to watch Wimbledon despite preparing for C&SC entrance examination, I got two advices from him, first was to be organized, even a regular

change of motor cycle oil falls in this category, second advice , he gave me with a deep thought ‘ I don’t think you will ever be needing it but in case if you ever do...please don’t use CO jeep to come to office from house in the morning’. Throughout the compilation of the book I remained in touch with him and he has many interesting tales to narrate.

I have not served in these old two regiments, 5 Lt and 6 Lt but 6 Lt was with us in Sargodha occupying the same office block. It was being commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Mahmood a very humble and friendly senior. Captain Waqas Saleh (Brigadier retired) was the adjutant other officers included were Lieutenant Amjad Khan (his son is also in AD). From them, the Glorious history was often heard. Major Anwar SJ was the Brigade major and was a role model and hero among all junior officers and equally respected by the seniors as well. 5 LAA was also part of the same AA Brigade but not stationed at Sargodha and they would often visit the station to take part in the sports matches; they had a winning combination in Boxing. Captain Talmiz Abbas was another iconic officer of 5 LAA, he had a command over the Urdu poetry and as such was the life of the BOQs during his short stay at station. Captain Awan later commanded Chitral Scouts was another very popular officer. Thus the officers of 5 and 6 had very cordial relation yet they would often highlight, and debate over the Quaid’s visit in 1948 and Dacca 1971. In the same period in 1986, Colonel Fazli (retired) came to Sargodha in connection with his lands and as luck would have it, he stayed with me for a night in the BOQs. He was very much present at that time and narrated the visit and early days which to me at that time were very interesting yet I failed to grasp them.

### **Life in Ack Ack - Eighties**

In eighties, working environment in Ack Ack were a mixed bag of feeling, on one hand the deployment at Pak-Afghan Border

was a matter of thrill and adventure, same holds true for the posts at Siachen Glacier. At Sargodha, the heart of AA and PAF, the induction of F-16 in 1984 had brought a new change, skies were shrieking with the jet roars of Fighting Falcon. On arrival at the unit, a second lieutenant was supposed to write a demi official letter to the commanding officer informing him , how please and happy he is to be posted in the regiment and on such and such date he is arriving by so and so train. Most of the Ack Ack stations were even unknown to majority of army officers including Qadirabad, Mailsi, Sahiwal and Sargodha. Malir itself was a labyrinth of regiments and many a times subalterns landed in another regiment in search of their own. 5 HAA , 6 LAA, 13 LAA and 19 (SP) LAA were the most popular and famous regiments specially 5 HAA due to Quaid visit and 6 LAA due to its performance at Dacca.

The offices were simple in layout, only authorised furniture, no television or radio. However every good battery commander had one Oxford Dictionary on his table. A subaltern was not allowed to sit in the office; a good battery commander will keep him on toes throughout the day. Ration inspection, kit inspection, cook house inspection, weapon cleaning, maintaining troops documents, and so on. At Zuhr, a prayer break was observed in which majority of officers will offer their prayers in the main mosque. A subaltern was never forced to offer his prayers, religion and its observance was a private affair. Lunch in the mess at 1430 hours and then a bit of nap before the evening games which has to be played with troops. Back to room, change and go for either night training or for dinner in the mess, come back again change and check the guards at night. This was the life pattern of a subaltern. He is really taken on the regiment strength after he has qualified his basic course and now understands the equipment, the guns and can operate the radar.

There were three basic courses, officers weapon course (OW) conducted at Division Battle school, for Sargodha it was at Kharian

under an infantry division. The Junior Officers Leadership (JOL) at Quetta and finally own arms basic (YOs) at Malir (Karachi). Result of these courses would write the destiny of the officer. Duties of adjutant included ensuring that out station calls of CO are connected. Army introduced direct dialing PASCOM system in 1993, before this, the calls to other formations and out stations regiments had to be through the operator. An officer could book a civil call before 0730 and after 1400 hours for a maximum duration of three minutes. Therefore signal detachments and operators were always treated with extra courtesy and invited on all events of regiment. Pay collection and distribution was an event by itself. A subaltern or the duty officer would go to the National Bank escorted by two soldiers armed with Rifle G-3 but whose ammunition was always kept sealed. It would take hours to collect the half a million rupees of pay. Bank would give notes in varying values, Rupees 500 hundred note came in nineties thus hundred rupees was the highest denomination. The entire regiment would sit, infact waits for the duty officer to arrive back from bank. The safe arrival news was always given to the CO. Each and every individual was given pay by hand by the duty officer, asking him questions about his pay and cuttings. The whole parade would consume over four hours with occasional tea breaks from regimental canteen. All civilian contractors would be present too. One touchy issue in this parade was the absence of batman's; they as an institution had the best of excuses. A subaltern would rarely give up his moral and written instructions. A second lieutenant was and still is the most feared and loved officer after commanding officer in the regiment. Among the regiment institutions, canteen and canteen contractor played an important and interesting role; he was a running bank for all the regiment. CO would lay down the limit of loan or bill of each rank including officers and bill had to be paid by the first week of every month. At times an individual would receive the sad news of his father or mother's death, he was immediately sent on leave along with the cash borrowed from canteen. To check the register of the canteen was also a duty of the duty officer.

Video Cassette Recorder (VCR) was newly inducted in AA, as training equipment; GHQ also issued training movies on various subjects. Troops were shown these movies during classes. VCR was also use as recreational item, movies for troops on week-end, duly censored and passed by the adjutant. At times bachelor officers with approved permission were allowed to watch movies in tea bar. The regimental tea bars were established in one of the office room; kitchen itself under a canvas. Every tea bar had standard items, a book shelf, a three seater sofa, few wooden chairs, regimental silver and newspaper along with ash trays. Tea break was consumed at 1030 hours, only items prepared by own cook were served. An officer coming back from leave was traditionally bound to bring sweets (only of one type not mixed). CO would always give food for thought during these tea breaks. Clerks were indispensable in the regiment; they knew the rules and regulations. Pay, allowances, claims and bills cutting was done centrally at Rawalpindi, thus any officer even going on leave to this city was bound to resolve all issues of the regiment.

Computers were being in the process of induction in the army, they were formally inducted in mid-nineties, however in mid eighties, officers became aware of it. Among the regiments having a computer of own became a symbol of technical and intellectual superiority over others. Computers were purchased for the computer literacy of the officers and to prepare the regiment for the coming revolution, it has worked very well. Captain Uzair (Brigadier retired) and Captain Ibrahim (Brigadier retired) were the pioneer officers in establishing computer literacy in AA. 58 MAA was the first regiment in AA to buy a computer. a historic trip undercommand Major J.R.A. Khan in his red Suzuki Fx was undertaken from Sargodha to Lahore.

Exercises with PAF at Sargodha were a learning by itself, PAF as a service is highly disciplined and strict observant of written

instructions. High Mark in 1986 at Sargodha was apex of the simulated air warfare with real low level mass raids from multiple directions by F-16, A-5s, and Mirages. In field formations LAA and SPs LAA, newly inducted MI-24 Hind Gunship in Indian Army was the obsession; how to shoot it down. Many study periods were conducted on the threat from gunship helicopters. This new threat from air revived the interest of field and armoured formations in the lethality of own LAAs regiments. The general mind set among the field formations in Burma and Africa on the air threat have been to point all the machine guns in the air as the best and most viable option. This culture lasted till the arrival of helicopters on the military horizon. Incidentally gunships were not employed in any conventional war in the sub-continent or even in Europe, thus threat was based primarily on the technical aspects of the MI-24.

Exercises at the bases and in the field were very enjoyable. AA at the bases was static in deployment, guns raised on pits and then improvement of these pits. After a day of settling, routine becomes very conducive, fighter aircraft taking off, making circuits, test flights and finally the day of exercise when all of a sudden the air raids would come from north and as the guns are laying the next wave attacks at low level, not more than fifty feet high from east and this continues for couple of minutes and then all of a sudden calmness. 14.5mm looks the most glamorous in such engagement, single man on ground taking head on a fighter pilot. Troops also feel happy sitting on the guns and by end of winter collective are more trained. The doctrine was that attacks will be low and from multi direction in waves. All night the own regiment's Radar operated thus there was an activity around the clock. Sargodha town was quite close by thus the music from cinema halls and their songs would blare the night.

## **Present, 2018-2020**

Major collection of data is for the first two chapters British National Archives available on line, British Cabinet Papers, London Gazette and Imperial War Museum has been consulted; the audio recordings on the early days of AA in Burma and Malir were also useful. For period after independence, own regimental Digest of Service especially 5 HAA, 13 LAA, 20 HAA, 29 LAA, 43 LAA and 58 LAA were of great help in unfolding the 1965 and 1971 Wars. The War Diaries of all the regiments for 1965 and 1971 Wars were retrieved from Army Institute of Military History (AIMH) at GHQ. Interviews with veterans including Lieutenant Colonel Atta Awan SJ, Brigadier Anwar Khan SJ, Lieutenant General Khateer, Lieutenant General Iftikhar and General Ehsan Ul Haq and most of other officers, junior commissioned officers were conducted, same holds true for Siachen, Kargil and Afghan Wars. Brigadier Rizwan Ahmed (retired) was a great help; he presented his ibex formation sign which he has been preserving for well over two decades. Atlantique incident was probed in detail.

The best help came from 3 AA Brigade 'Digest of Service' for which Brigadier Aleem is to be given credit, he had unearthed it during his command; it was lying in a store-room. Brigadier Aleem also helped in pointing out two missing Japanese Swords in 5 LAA. In the same context an antique gun was also discovered in 58 MAA ; it was purchased by an unknown officer during its stay at Parachinar and was unattended for well over three decades, Lieutenant Colonel Ahsan did it.

After reading through the books, I first visited Glorious, Sky Saviours, Kalash Redeemers at Peshawar and Warsak. Glorious had an entire area to itself comprising of half a dozen old spacious barracks which allowed it to display its history in grandeur. Glorious



had lost all its property in 1971 War and as such it is a great feat to reconstitute the history. It has published a book of its own history in 2011-12, as well. During stay at Warsak, 'Sky Saviours' were having their dispersal exercise. They also have plenty of space to display their history, their tea bar is small but filled with historical souvenirs, a painting of 14.5mm is eye catching. A very well preserved Digest of Service with pictures and written in detail. 'Kalash Redeemers' were raised in 1972 and served in Kalash few years ago and as such have adopted the motto. Overall Warsak is a beautiful garrison with a good mess, the best part is the well-stocked and well laid Station Library; a rarity these days. Troops of present day are more smart, physically fit, mentally alert yet retaining their traditional hospitality and innocence. The security threat and resultant mental alertness has given a new outlook to the cantonment.

Next, a visit was planned to 13 LAA; at an hour drive from Rawalpindi. Regiment was the first one to be raised after independence and perhaps the only regiment in entire army in which all command boards are written in Urdu a tradition started in 1949 and in vogue till today. An excellent history room and very well preserved documents. Later thorough the course of this book I have few more interactions and found them to be the best in preserving regimental history, highly courteous and professional outfit.

At Malir, '**Home of Air Defence**', I visited two brigade headquarters and seven regiments including the newly raised LOMAD. I met its adjutant a young lieutenant who is too good in painting and highly motivated as all subalterns are. Exercise Al Bayza was in progress and officers and regiments were busy in it. Colonel James is the colonel staff, he is a 'Guerrilla Officer' and it is always a lively experience to meet them and Colonel James is no exception. Major General Zahid Sarwar was kind enough to spare time amidst all this and gave useful tips on the compilation

of history. Malir has changed a lot in all these years, now a lively and lovely place, paved walkways which allows walking around the entire three miles circumference in a pleasurable manner. Highpoint is the AD Mart, it is a classic food court which offers a variety of local delicacies. Lieutenant General Hamood Uz Zaman was instrumental as GOC in developing these amenities. The 4 Dots Mess is historical in every aspect, lush green lawn, well maintained accommodation, sitting in the lawn one is conscious of the history. I walked many a times on the road which leads into Malir Cantonment and where Quaid-e-Azam paid his very first visit to 5 HAA. Major General Tahir Qazi had re-enacted the scene when he was commanding the division at Malir. Not much has changed in last seven decades, same ground, and same sheds of AA Workshops where Quaid and other dignitaries sat to witness the equipment display. A beautiful, well-lit monument is erected at the same place, it is informative and also a source of pride.

**School of Army Air Defence** is nostalgic for all AD Officers as all have spent months here during their service undergoing various courses. The basic outlook of school still retains its eight decades old history, open space mostly void of grass, bushy trees, barracks and same weather. However within the premises an entire new spectrum has been created, General Ehsan Ul Haq training area, Major General (late) Moin ud Din Auditorium and Lieutenant General Iftikhar Auditorium, modern digital class rooms and above all comfortable living accommodation for students. School Library is really impressive, I luckily found an article written by Major General Iftikhar narrating how he was selected to undergo gunnery staff course in UK; back in 1953. School Mess has undergone quite renovations to an extent that it is difficult to locate old photographs, silver and albums. The student accommodation is much much improved from mid-eighties. The Church next to School Mess is also renovated now.

**Air Defence Centre** is now the hub of major activities, colonel commandant installation ceremonies are conducted here so are the commanding officers bi-annual conference and host of reunions. Brigadier Asim was very helpful and so was Colonel Irfan and Major Gondal . In the adjacent Records Wing, I found a treasure of information in the form of old documents, really impressive and amazing to see such professional preservation of documents.

It took almost a week to understand the basic purpose of having a Centre. It is the cradle of our troops, they are trained here and as such our entire doctrine depends upon the training which is imparted to the troops. It is a morale boosting affair to see the standards of training which this centre has achieved over the years. It started in 1990 under most adverse environment and with the help and guidance of COAS General Aslam Baig it nurtured. It must be noted down that General Aslam's elder brother commanded 41 HAA during the 1971 War. The recruits all raw are inducted on merit and given thirty weeks of training before they are posted to various AAD Regiments. I saw them undergoing advance training and through the photo data bank had a visual tour of last thirty years of the centre. The present day centre is almost complete in every sense; there are classrooms, mosques, training areas, living barracks and so on. But more than the mere physical structures it is the spirit and new training doctrine which is impressive, recruits wear mufti with tie, they are taken out on study tours to various installations and they are also taken to KFC and McDonald's for recreation on week end. Thus living close to an international city and busy airport has inculcated the desired confidence in the recruits. There could not have been a better choice of a station for the Air Defence recruits than present. At Malir, I was fortunate to have an interaction with Major General (retired) Mustan, he is as simple, humble and courteous as he was when I last met him in 1992. At that time , he was commanding the brigade at Warsak and when I entered his office on a hot summer day, he

was working under a fan , wearing the regulation white vest. At Malir, Major General Mustan highlighted the history the events of past, while we were having this discussion, Major General (retired) Naqvi also arrived and join the discussion.

From Malir I travelled by train to Pano Aqil to visit Shola Fagan, they were out in operational area . The train travel is nostalgic In every sense as train arrives at Pano Aqil early in morning and halts for few minutes. It was at Rohri junction that I saw a poster of Pakistan Railways which highlighted the very first air raid at Wazirabad during 1965 War. From Pano Aqil after a day stay I again took a train to reach Sahiwal, spend few days there with the Five. Regiment was being commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Hassan Qazi who is a second generation officer, his father also commanded same regiment, Five luckily also have an entire garrison to themselves thus they are able to display history all around. I read their Digest of service in detail, it is among the oldest surviving document and as such open new vistas. Interestingly the visit of Quaid in February 1948 in the Digest of Service Is covered with only few lines however all newspaper cuttings are preserved. I had long discussions with the commanding officer over each and every aspect of that visit. I am personally grateful to him because as a result he was able to discover five new photographs of that historic visit including the pictures of two soldiers being decorated by Quaid during his visit. It simply highlights that history is an Interesting affair and nothing is over or final.

From Sahiwal I took a Daewoo bus to reach Sargodha, it was like coming back home after three decades as my parent regiment was also stationed here. Things have change for good, Careem rent a cab is working in Sargodha thus it is easy to move around. In the cantonment the security is paramount thus a drastic change from past when anyone could come in a rickshaw. Athwanja was training

for induction in operational area, absolutely a fantastic experience, to me it seem as if I am among the guerrillas , morning PT, then firing ranges, again physical training and it continued till late into darkness. Confident , smart, physically fit and highly motivated troops . Polo is a new sports and is played extensively at Sargodha , Major Mairaj (now lieutenant colonel) is the main force behind this. Digest of Service of half a dozen regiments were read during the stay including that of 3 AGRPA. Brigadier Aleem has an interesting story as how he found this digest of service among the old trunks while he was commanding the brigade. It is now fully preserved and digitalised. It was at Sargodha that orders came that smoking is no more allowed in the army messes or offices and that a separate place be marked for smoking In the building.

Multan was also visited where Sattath had arrived only recently thus in process of settling down, Kutaibah Mujahid has been here for bit long and as such their history room is worth visiting. They have also done a remarkable work in preserving and portraying their achievements and history. Lahore and Gujranwala were also visited. 148 Regiment Chinari has a unique honour, although they were raised In nineties yet by virtue of having 82 LAA battery they trace their origin to 1948 Kashmir War and as such are the only AD regiment which Is affiliated with Kashmir Regiment and attends their conferences and reunions. Centurions do take lot of pride in the fact that they apart from taking active participation in Siachen War also played the main role in the initial establishment of AD Centre and more importantly in the designing and presentation of Cap Badge of AD.

## **Pictures**

Pictures used in this book are over whelming taken by officers and soldiers of Army Air Defence. Mr Amir of Fine Studio at Malir

Cantonment who is the official photographer of SAAD and AADC definitely stands out in this field. Havildar Zaheer, Photographer of HQ AAD also contributed immensely in this field. Captain Saqlain of 67 (SP) LAA, Naik Nazeer of 58 MAA, Naik Shams of 5 LAA, Sepoy Waseem at AADC all have contributed in this book. All paintings use in this book are at display in various AD Messes and in regiments. Photography is very much part of army culture, not long ago, every major visit and event was always preserved by the professional photographer and names were always written at the bottom of the framed pictures. This slowly died out with the advent of digital camera and now there are plenty of beautiful and eye catching snaps of weapons firing which was very rare in the past. However the custom of writing the names has also diminished and only very few regiments have done, 6 LAA and 13 LAA stand out in this aspect. Another aspect is that within regiment the old pictures are now in the form of digital pictures which were scanned by the office scanner, these pictures looks very good on computer or mobile screen but they have very low resolution which makes their printing almost impossible. majority of these pictures (WWII) are downloaded from net and have low resolutions. It was only in the end that I found photo albums in AD Command and these were drum scanned from Lahore, also 5 LAA in the end was able to do the drum scanning of their historical pictures.

### **Major General Agha Masood Hasan (late)**

Unfortunately before the publishing of this book Major General Agha took his last breath and left for heavenly abode in October 2019. He last came to HQ Army Air Defence in October 2018 to be part of ex commanders gathering.

When I joined 58 MAA in September 1984, Major General Agha Masood Hassan was the GOC, he had recently taken over the

command. He was present at the Sargodha garrison for his inaugural study period, and it was my very first day in the army and in the anti-aircraft. I was introduced to him as the second lieutenant, he welcomed me and spoke few words in a voice full of passion and conviction, *on the air threat present and how vital it is to deter it and it can only be done if we are separated from artillery and be recognized as a new arm*. From that day onward I never considered myself as a gunner but always as an Air Defender that was the power of his personality and conviction. While serving at Siachen with infantry I wrote him a DO letter from the post in which I requested that ‘I want to join army aviation so please forward my application, I will be grateful.’ He very kindly accepted my request, replied back and also sent a parcel comprising of edibles, which I proudly showed to other officers on the post and also ensured that everyone in the sector should also know that this is how Air Defence is different from others. Major General Agha falls in the category of great men, in the league of Air Marshall Lord Trenchard, General Billy Mitchell, Giulio Douhet, Lieutenant Colonel Bazely, Major General Parham, Brigadier M.M. karim (retired) and late Lieutenant General Azmat Baksh Awan; all these officers pondered over the new Air Power and sought radical changes in the army culture. Almost all of these great men were initially taken as anarchists in military traditions but at present all of their views have been not only accepted but implemented around the globe. These men had voiced for the separation of air force from army, raising, commanding and controlling army’s own aircraft squadrons and finally separation of these squadrons from Royal Artillery. Major General Agha once he himself was convinced that Air Defence by virtue of its nature is different from artillery spent all his military life in convincing others and he finally succeeded in 1989 to raise Army Air Defence. He deeply influenced young officers on this new revolution in military affairs to an extent that subalterns of Ack Ack were popularly referred as ‘Agha’s Men’. President of Pakistan Dr Arif Alvi was present at his ‘Namaz-e-Janaza’, a last tribute to this visionary officer.

Lieutenant General retired Iftikhar Hussain Shah also left for his final flight In February 2020. I met him in November 2019 at his residence at Islamabad for an interview regarding the history. He is a well-known figure, one of the handful of general officers who have earned flying brevet. In November , he looked healthy, happy and contented. He narrated his life, he belonged to Kohat and he opted for 13 LAA because it was in Peshawar and more than that he wanted to see Karachi. ‘ i was advised by one of my senior who happened to be my relative also, that these AA Gunners do their courses at Karachi’ was his explanation. He also laughingly narrated how he had to learn hockey In the 13 LAA, because the team was leaving for Karachi to take part in the annual sports fixtures. General in his career commanded 67 (SP) LAA, remained AD School Commandant, also commanded 4 AD Division and also remained Commander of AAD. After his retirement he was Governor of KPK , ambassador to Turkey and a federal minister as well.

### **Army Museum ‘Air Defence Wall’**

In April 2019, HQ AAD Command highlighted to Army Museum; the absence of Air Defence Wall in museum. All other regiments of army has one wall dedicated to their history. Thus an interaction with 104 AD Brigade took place, initial work was carried out under supervision of Brigadier Amir and the officers of 133 RCG. Later, Brigadier Amir left for China and Lieutenant Colonel Shahid and Major Zaheer carried out the task. It was supervised by Director General AAD Major General Azhar Rasheed; quite long presentations took place at AAD Directorate and later at Westridge under Lieutenant General Hamood Uz Zaman. Each and every word and picture was threadbare and discussed in detail before it was approved. Not surprisingly, the event of Quaid’s visit to 5 HAA took the longest followed by events of 1971 War at Dacca; a great work in the end. It was the realization during the preparation of this



historic wall, that how important it is to preserve own regimental history. Two of their most repeated queries were regarding the Ibex Head and battle Honours

## **Ibex Head**

Between 1950 -1989, the Ibex Head was synonymous with Ack Ack, a monument has been erected at Sargodha Mess. There is bit of inquisitiveness as why a goat head was selected for anti-aircraft. 'The head of a mountain goat in profile was selected as formation sign for the army artillery groups; in tradition of the battering ram used to breach defences; symbolising the offensive character of massed artillery fire.' Latter when the AGRPAs were affiliated with field formation the Ibex Head was retained by 3 AGRPA and as such it became synonym with AA.

## **Battle Honours**

These are the honour bestowed upon a regiment for its performance in the 'war only'. In the aftermath of the 1971 War, 5 LAA (Sargodha), 20 LAA (Sargodha), 29 LAA (Zafarwal), 52 HAA (Sargodha), 58 LAA (Badin) and 75 LAA (Sabuna) were awarded the Battle Honours for their outstanding performance during the war. It is worth mentioning that no such battle honours were instituted during the 1965 War. Traditionally 6 LAA and 43 LAA are included in this exclusive and elusive band of regiments for the reason that no army regiment deployed in East Pakistan in 1971 War was decorated with this honour.

## **The Great Historic Debate**

In the beginning it was highlighted that the project of History Book started in 2003, thus It is bit natural to ask as why it has taken so long, one answer is that it is not an unusual delay and one can

quote History of Army Aviation which took fifteen years before it was published. In our particular case, the great historic debate over the Quaid E Azam visit on 21 February 1948 is the stumbling block. Both regiments have their own version supported by the newspaper, official papers and few published books. None can deny that Quaid E Azam did visit only one regiment (5 HAA) on that day but rest of the events are contested by 6 LAA. As stated before that during the compilation of this book new pictures of that visit have been unearthed from official archives thus the entire visit is now seen from a different perspective. All in all, the debate comes down to one picture, the famous guard of honour, which is depicted as parade in the book Izzat O iqbal with the caption of 'Quaid inspecting the parade of 5 HAA and 6 LAA'. The fact remains that events as depicted in Izzat O Iqbal are bit convoluted, for example Major Sher Jang was not the commanding officer of 5 HAA as stated in that book. Newspaper reporting of that day are also variable, one reporting air display while two others totally neglecting this event. However what all agree that Quaid did visit 5 HAA only and addressed the troops of 5 HAA and 6 LAA. Now, what is the sequence of events? who invited Quaid?, which regiment decorated the dais? what were the number of troops of each regiment? and most importantly which regiment is entitled to own that picture are still being debated.

In March 2020, a board was formed under Major General Asif Goraya and commanding officers of both regiments appeared with their supporting documents. Also Colonel in Chief as a matter of fact did highlighted in his 19 December 2019 visit to HQ AAD Command, that this debate must come to an end.

Another classic debate is on the events at Dacca in 1971. One LAA Battery of 43 LAA Regiment fought the war under command 6 LAA yet remaining officially on the strength of its parent regiment 43 LAA. Sitara e Jurat of Brigadier Anwar Khan is claimed by both

regiment. In the end it is written statement of Brigadier ( r) Anwar Khan SJ whichh has been taken as an authority ‘ My SJ belongs to 6 LAA ‘.

3 LAA Battery is another hotly debated topic. Best part about 3 LAA Battery is that Its War Diary is preserved less events of one year (1942) and also the initial months of 1947 are missing.

### **HQ Army Air Defence Command**

I witnessed the transformation of HQ AADC in last year and half. First is the new Officers Tea Bar, a much needed requirement. The concept of tea bar has also undergone quite a transition, now the office timings are as such that officers have to consume lunch in office. A beautiful and high –tech bar; coffee machine was added in winter of 2019, bar already has a sugar cane processing machine presented by an officer while coming back from China. Lieutenant Colonel Nauman (ex 43 LAA) has played a key role in this transformation. He also undertook the much needed expansion of outer outlook of the HQ; which now gives the best outlook among all such HQs. Old guns were renovated by the EME staff and this is a colossal task. In the same breadth, the offices of officers and clerks were also uplifted. In the AAD Mess at Abid Majeed Road, the expansion is still underway, one block for soldiers on duty has been inaugurated. A new block of guest room was initiated in May 2019 and it has been completed , an accommodation block adjacent to it is still underway and hopefully will be completed in another two months by end September 2020.

### **End Note**

Book was ready by end November 2019 and it was presented to all retired commanders at HQ during their get together on 19 December 2019. In February 2020 the clearance was received from Army

institute of Military History (AIMH) who went through In details about the events and seek clarification on few, in form of references and citations. later It was cleared by military intelligence directorate too. The book after required insertion and deletion was forwarded to all general officers and formations of AD, their observations where relevant have now been incorporated. Meanwhile, I left for Virginia and got stuck due to Covid but through the email all required actions were undertaken. One of the blessing of this lockdown was the access to the Indian military data base through the Carrier Library of James Madison University at Harrisonburg Virginia. Official Indian histories of 1948, 1965 and 1971 Wars were downloaded and so were quite a number of their articles and publications. Also , British Archives were contacted and a picture emerged which shows that there is a research work going on in India but unfortunately Indians do not have primary sources like War Diaries of 3 LAA Battery and 3 HAA Battery. In UK, the War Diaries of majority of AA Batteries and regiments are preserved because these were sent during Burma Campaign , yet majority of them were lost during retreat. Apart from pre Independence era the other major events are the wars, 1971 War is a case study as AA Regiments performed very well, it is the loss of War Diary at Dacca which thus compels to rely upon oral history and newspapers.

Brigadier Aiml and Internal Security Branch at HQ AAD have been looking after this project and my sincere thanks to them. The fact remains that without the patronization of Lieutenant General Hamood Zaman Khan, Commander Army Air Defence this book might never have been completed. He took a keen interest. He gave an open and free hand, plenty of time to gather the data ensuring that a book based upon logic, military traditions and facts should emerge.